

**LGA Corporate Peer Challenge  
Gloucester City Council Action Plan**

No	Recommendation from the peer team	Our response and current/planned action. (May 2023)	Update (September 2023)	RAG Rating	Timescale
1.	<p><b>Performance Management Framework</b> Utilising the Council Plan as a base document; the council needs to evolve a SMART performance management framework that promotes timely challenge and proactive management action where needed, and allows the council to better communicate and celebrate its successes</p>	<p>Agreed. We will review the current input-based performance reporting information provided to Cabinet and Overview and Scrutiny with a more qualitative, outcome-focused approach that demonstrates the Council's progress towards achieving the vision and aims set out in the Council Plan. This work had already commenced with the production of the first bi-annual Council Plan Progress Report in January 2023.</p> <p>We will retain the existing performance framework for internal monitoring of service delivery and performance, as this has proved a valuable mechanism for identifying service challenges and ensuring appropriate and timely action.</p>	<p>The first Council Plan Progress Report was received by Cabinet and Overview and Scrutiny in January 2023. It reported on progress against the Council's strategic objectives, including, where available, details of outcomes and relevant performance. Each action had a RAG rating. The next report is scheduled for March 2024, to coincide with the end of this Council's term.</p> <p>After the 2024 local elections, work will commence on a new Council Plan and greater importance will be placed on identifying outcome-focused actions and measures.</p>	Complete	December 2023
2.	<p><b>Review delivery arrangements for external communications</b> For the council to be better able to communicate and celebrate its successes, an urgent review is needed of the council's current delivery arrangements for external communications and marketing</p>	<p>Agreed. We will undertake a review of current arrangements, working with the Communications Business Partner and Managers to understand what works and what improvements are required to ensure that external communications are proactive and appropriately resourced. Following the review, we will consider options for future delivery of the service. As part of this, we will consider whether a dedicated LGA Communications Peer Review would assist the analysis.</p>	<p>A new Head of Transformation and Commissioning has been recruited and will begin to progress these actions when they start on 18 September.</p>	Not Started	March 2024

3.	<p><b>Review HR delivery arrangements</b> The Council needs to carry out a review of its current strategic and transactional HR delivery arrangements with a view to optimising the ability of Gloucester City Council to recruit and retain the very best staff</p>	<p>Agreed. We will undertake a review of current arrangements, working with the HR Business Partner and Managers to understand what works and what improvements are required. The current arrangements consist of a collection of functions provided by different teams at Gloucestershire County Council and, as part of the review, we will take the time to fully understand the relationships between these functions. Following the review, we will consider options for future delivery of the service.</p>	<p>A new Head of Transformation and Commissioning has been recruited and will begin to progress these actions when they start on 18 September.</p>	Not Started	March 2024
4.	<p><b>Develop and maintain robust project governance arrangements</b> If Gloucester City Council is going to continue on its current growth trajectory, it must develop and maintain robust project governance arrangements that provide timely line of sight for the political leadership on matters of budgetary management and control, and risk and sensitivity analysis, for example, it is recommended that the Forum Business Case is subject to continuous review and refresh to consider the impact of increased borrowing costs and contract inflation on delivery and the council's medium term financial plan</p>	<p>Agreed. We recognise that our ambitious growth agenda must be supported by rigorous governance arrangements, resource planning and risk management to ensure its success, while also maintaining the financial viability of the Council as a whole. We have begun formalising the project governance arrangements already in place for our major schemes, and the newly created Major Projects Board will provide the essential leadership and financial oversight needed to balance momentum with risk, through a robust reporting framework.</p> <p>In respect of The Forum, continuous review of the business case is already in place but will be embedded through the new major projects reporting framework.</p> <p>This work will be guided by the new overarching Growth Strategy highlighted in recommendation 5, to ensure that the Council takes a broad view across all major City-wide schemes and projects.</p>	<p>New reporting measures were put in place for major project governance in February 2023. The Cabinet Member for Performance and Resources now attends the Major Projects Board, alongside the Leader of the Council, Managing Director and S151 Officer.</p>	On time completion expected	Ongoing

5.	<p><b>Overarching Growth Strategy</b> The council needs to consider pulling all the strands of its growth work into one overarching Growth Strategy which should align with the Council Plan</p>	<p>Agreed. The Regeneration and Economic Development Strategy expired in 2021 and, while the Council's ambitious growth agenda has pushed on at pace, regenerating the City and creating clear economic benefits, we agree that a new strategy is now needed to draw this work together. Building on the work of the City Commission, the new strategy will pull together the Council's priority regeneration projects alongside the actions and objectives of the City Commission, while putting equality of opportunity for all residents at the forefront of our plans. The strategy will also highlight the essential role that our partners play in achieving our vision.</p>	<p>Work is underway on the development of the growth strategy with a target date for adoption of March 2024. The terms of the strategy have been agreed by the Senior Management Team and Cabinet, and have been considered by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee. A resource has been appointed who has developed a project plan and is working with a range of external stakeholders to gain views and opinions.</p>	On time completion expected	March 2024
6.	<p><b>Address worklessness and improve the skills and employability of local people</b> Active consideration needs to be given to the development of new programmes to address worklessness and to improve the employability and skills of people within the city's most deprived communities</p>	<p>Under consideration. The role of District Councils viz-a-viz other authorities such as the County Council in relation to the skills agenda is currently under review, following the County Council's Devolution bid and incorporation of adult skills resource from the Local Enterprise Partnership, and the Government's recent announcement that it is minded to cease funding Local Enterprise Partnerships from April 2024.</p> <p>The City Council is already delivering individual projects to improve the skills and employability of local people through its Social Value Policy application to various projects. In particular, it has contracted with Kier as part of the Forum development to develop a skills programme to create employment opportunity in construction and hospitality industries.</p>	<p>Activities currently underway include: Securing a mechanism to enable the Learning Hub at The Forum to continue beyond the build programme. Officers are discussing with Kier the legacy of the Hub and how it might continue to support skills development in the city centre after 2024.</p> <p>Ensuring the delivery of Employment &amp; Skills Plans within major developments. The Gloucester City Plan, which was adopted by the Council in spring 2023, includes a policy requiring the developers of larger housing and commercial sites to prepare an Employment and Skills Plan. Two schemes have now been consented and the Council is working with them to ensure the developments provide opportunities for local people.</p> <p>The Council is also supporting a Construction Careers Roadshow amongst secondary schools in the County, delivered by the membership organisation, Constructing Excellence (Gloucestershire).</p> <p>City Council officers met recently with County Officers within the Learning and Skills team to share understanding of each others' activities. The County Council has a much greater resource directed at Employment &amp; Skills activities, particularly targeted at overcoming the barriers to securing employment and skills that face many residents.</p>	On time completion expected	<p>End 2024</p> <p>Ongoing task</p> <p>Ongoing Task</p> <p>Ongoing task</p>

7.	<p><b>Review staff resources against the Council Plan requirements</b></p> <p>There is an urgent need to take stock as to the sufficiency of the council's senior staff resources to continue to deliver everything that the council is seeking to do through the Council Plan and at a pivotal time for the local government sector</p>	<p>Agreed. A Senior Management Restructure has been developed, consulted on, and is in the process of being implemented, with the primary aim of increasing strategic capacity by replacing the Director of Policy Resources post with two Head of Service posts, one for Finance and Resources and one for Transformation and Commissioning, along with the bringing together of a number of lines of business to provide greater synergy and cooperation, and to improve the customer journey. Increasing the Senior Management Team by one full time post will add to the capacity and resilience required to ensure that the Council is equipped to deliver the ambitions set out in the Council Plan and the focus on 'transformation' will allow important work to improve the customer journey to continue at pace, while also providing the necessary capacity to meet recommendations 2 and 3.</p>	<p>The Senior Management Restructure has been implemented, with the final personnel changes taking place in September with the arrival of the new Head of Transformation and Commissioning.</p>	Complete	September 2023
8.	<p><b>Review the role of members</b></p> <p>The council is recommended to seek external advice and support to review the role of members within the organisation and to help address a number of current challenges including member/officer relations, member conduct, and clarity on roles and responsibilities. The recruitment of a permanent Monitoring Officer, with sufficient capacity, would also help inform such a review and lead on any identified</p>	<p>Agreed. A permanent Monitoring Officer has been in post since January 2023, and we will undertake a programme of activity, steered by the Council's internal Corporate Governance Group and supported by the LGA as appropriate, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A review of and update to key documents in the Constitution relevant to Member and Officer conduct and the relationship between Members and Officers.</li> <li>• Refresher training for all Members on the Code of Conduct. Training for</li> </ul>	<p>The Corporate Governance Group has agreed a rolling programme of work that includes items relating to the role of Members.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Council has adopted a countywide Members' Code of Conduct and a revised Protocol on Member/Officer Relations. The Officer Code of Conduct is in the process of being reviewed, so that it aligns with these newly adopted documents, and is scheduled for adoption in November 2023.</li> <li>• Refresher training for all Members on the Code of Conduct was delivered by the Monitoring Officer and was well-attended. Further</li> </ul>	Complete	Summer 2023

	improvements	<p>Members and Officers to allow better understanding of their respective roles and responsibilities.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>In consultation with the Member Development Working Group, a review of the Member Induction Programme ahead of the 2024 City Council Elections and consideration of how the ongoing Member Development Programme can build on recent positively received sessions aimed at setting realistic expectations and increasing Members' understanding of how the Council works, and the Councillor's role within this.</li> <li>Discussion with the Overview and Scrutiny (O&amp;S) Lead Members about how, alongside the successful pre-decision scrutiny, O&amp;S can add value through policy development in areas that will have a positive impact on residents and businesses.</li> </ul>	<p>training will take place after the 2024 local elections.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The Member Development Working Group and Senior Management Team have reviewed the 2021 Induction Programme, referring back to feedback gathered at the time and undertaking a survey of Members in their first term of office to seek views on what they now think would have been helpful to include in the Induction. All feedback has been predominantly positive and, while the programme will be tweaked and the content updated, the main change will be to spread the sessions over an extended period to prevent information overload. Following the 2024 Induction, the Member development programme will focus on briefings about key service areas to ensure that new Members are well informed and able to support and advise their constituents in relation to common issues and concerns.</li> <li>Following discussion with the O&amp;S Lead Members, the first Annual Work Programming workshop was held on 24 July, with Committee Members, Cabinet Members and Senior Management Team Officers. During the session, the Committee identified areas of interest to examine over the course of 2023-24 and Cabinet Members provided updates on their priorities and upcoming plans and policy changes. agreed a longer-term work programme to include areas of policy development alongside routine pre-Cabinet decision scrutiny. which the O&amp;S Committee may wish to input into. Three key themes were identified and a longer term work programme, including areas of policy development alongside routine pre-Cabinet decision scrutiny was formally approved on 4 September and is available online at: <a href="https://gloucester.gov.uk/agenda/2023/09/04/public-pack-agenda-document-for-overview-and-scrutiny-committee-04/09/2023-18:30"> (Public Pack)Agenda Document for Overview and Scrutiny Committee, 04/09/2023 18:30 (gloucester.gov.uk)</a>.</li> </ul>		<p>Spring 2024</p> <p>May 2024</p> <p>Autumn 2023</p>
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9.	<p><b>Whole organisation review of the cyber incident</b></p> <p>At the anniversary of the cyber incident, it is considered an opportune time for GCC to take stock of its recovery programme; it is important that this is a whole organisation review and not just centred on the technology aspects of the recovery</p>	<p>Agreed. In response to this recommendation, we included questions about the initial and ongoing impact of the cyber incident in the Staff Survey in order to better understand how the incident affected and continues to affect staff morale, and to highlight any blind spots in terms of the ongoing recovery.</p> <p>We will carry out a 'stock take' with our internal staff 'Change Champions' group to delve into the detail of the Staff Survey feedback and discuss the workarounds that improved service provision and should therefore be retained.</p> <p>This work will inform the organisation-wide recovery plan and associated communications plan, to ensure that ongoing recovery workstreams are captured and progress is communicated effectively. As part of an internal review of the incident already agreed to, there will be a full assessment of valuable lessons learned.</p>	<p>The staff survey was carried out in Jan/Feb 2023 and received a high response rate and a strong positive engagement score.</p> <p>Some of the specific cyber incident-related responses were:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Did your personal morale suffer as a result of the cyber incident? 49% (agree or strongly agree)</li> <li>- Is your personal morale still suffering as a result of the Cyber incident? 32%</li> <li>- I think the organisation has worked well together to tackle some of the issues experienced due to lack of systems? 58%</li> </ul> <p>The change champions staff network are reviewing all of the feedback arising from the staff survey and developing an action plan.</p> <p>In addition, officers have begun drafting a 'lessons learnt' report to take to Overview &amp; Scrutiny Committee before the end of the calendar year. A round table lessons learnt workshop was recently carried out and this is being taken forward to an action plan to embed these lessons into the council's procedures. The recently published <a href="#">ICO report</a> will also feed into this to ensure those actions are picked up.</p>		December 2023
10.	<p><b>Develop a strategic priority framework for tackling inequalities</b></p> <p>It is recommended that the council develops a strategic priority framework for tackling inequalities, both internally and with its partners, to be matched by adequate resource</p>	<p>Agreed, we are in the early stages of a scoping exercise.</p>	<p>Some consultation and data gathering has been completed to enable us to scope the breadth of the strategy. A proposal was reviewed by SMT on 19th September with a revised timetable of commencement in Autumn 2023 with completion expected in mid-2024.</p>	Delayed	<p>December 2023</p> <p><i>New deadline July 2024</i></p>