

Report sponsor: Chief Executive  
Report author: Director of Policy, Insight & Communications

## **Corporate Improvement Plan**

### **Purpose**

- 1.1 In June 2017 the Council invited the Local Government Association to undertake a Corporate Peer Challenge. The findings report published in December 2017 contained eleven recommendations for improvement which the Council has addressed through its Corporate Improvement Plan.
- 1.2 The LGA carried out a follow-up review in November 2018 to assess our progress. As presented to Audit & Account Committee in January 2019, the LGA findings reflected the significant work carried out during this year, including cultural change and getting more of the basics right, which has put the Council on a more positive and stable footing.
- 1.3 Over the last year, Audit and Accounts Committee has received regular monitoring reports on the CIP. This report presents a final summary of progress up to the end of February 2019, with 39 actions now complete and seven showing some slippage.
- 1.4 Recent work on a strategic diagnostic review has informed the development of new improvement priorities aligned to Council Plan for 2019/20 onwards. It is proposed the Corporate Improvement Plan will now be closed down and a review of relevant actions has been carried out to ensure these will be taken forward via other planning mechanisms.

### **Recommendations**

- 2.1 To note progress made in delivering the Corporate Improvement Plan.
- 2.2 To approve the closure of the CIP, noting that a number of actions will be carried forward into either the Council Plan or Diagnostic Improvement Plan.

### **Reason**

- 3.1 As part of the Sector Led Improvement approach, it is expected that local authorities are open to external challenge and learning (for example, hosting peer challenge reviews), and actively promoting their own improvement in priority areas. It is important for us as a council to take stock of external feedback and respond proactively.



## Supporting information

- 4.1 The Council provided a robust response to the 2017 LGA Peer Challenge findings by developing a Corporate Improvement Plan, based on 10 themes as shown below.



- 4.2 Considerable progress has been made since December 2017 in delivering the Corporate Improvement Plan with regular and effective oversight by Corporate Leadership Team (CLT), Audit & Accounts Committee and Executive Scrutiny Board.
- 4.3 The latest CIP monitoring sheet with detailed commentary is shown at **Appendix 1**. The summary position up to February 2019 is shown below.

Status	Sept 2018	Feb 2019
Completed	32	39
On track	21	16
Some slippage	8	7
Major slippage	0	0
Not started	1	0
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>62</b>	<b>62</b>

- 4.4 Headline achievements over the last 15 months include:

- **City Leadership** – a new Partnership vision 'closing the gap' was endorsed by Council Cabinet in March 2018 and a new Safer Stronger Board created.
- **Effective management** – additional capacity has been created at service director level and a new 'Team Derby' internal engagement framework was launched by

the Chief Executive in August 2019. This has proven a significant step forward in creating a strong and cohesive leadership team.

- **Constructive Member relationships** – the opportunity to improve councillor / colleague working featured as a key issue in the LGA report. During 2018, the LGA delivered training to three out of four political groups as well as over 100 colleagues. CLT also lead several sessions with senior managers focused on ‘political nous’.
- **Robust internal controls** – External Audit gave an unqualified opinion on the 2017/18 Statement of Accounts in August 2018. This is an excellent achievement given the historic valuation issues and earlier deadline for submission. Further work is being undertaken to achieve a positive Value for Money Opinion.
- **MTFP** – the Medium Term Financial Strategy 2019/20 to 2022/23 has been updated throughout the year and the Budget was approved by Full Council on 27 February 2019.
- **Productive and skilled workforce** – colleagues have benefitted from development opportunities through the Derby Professional Manager programme (launched in June 2018) and the Apprenticeship Levy. There is a continued emphasis on health and wellbeing although sickness absence remains higher than is desirable and robust targets have been set for 2019/20.
- **Sound Information Governance** – a number of policies have been integrated with good progress made with respect to cyber accreditation and raised awareness through e-learning.
- **Embedded Risk Management** – risk management has been strengthened by improved monitoring of registers, review by Corporate Risk Management Group and regular reporting to Audit & Accounts. Training for councillors and officers is taking place during February, March and April 2019.
- **Improved service outcomes** – good progress has been made against all Children's Services Single Inspection Framework (SIF) recommendations and through the Opportunity Area programme to engage with schools and develop enhanced learning and evaluation.
- **Innovative transformation** – work continues to develop the Council's digital strategy and implement ‘cashless’ solutions for customers. Many of these actions will feature in the new improvement programme.

4.5 There are seven **areas of slippage**:

- **Continue to develop our approach to community engagement (1.4)** – a community engagement framework will be developed by June 2019 (original date of September 2018, revised date of December 2018).
- **Ensure risk assessments are used in the analysis of future financial impacts. (2.4)** – the Gateway process has been approved and risk assessments will be incorporated into the Programme Management Office guidance and processes, including review of key decision points by the PMO Board, established in March 2019. This will form part of the 2019/20 PMO work programme.
- **Review priorities in Council Plan for 2019/20** – an initial draft of the Council Plan was presented to CLT and Directors in January 2019 (based on the findings from

the Diagnostic). This will be subject to wider consultation with group leaders, managers and partners before being presented to Cabinet over the summer.

- **Improve performance levels for Special Educational Needs (new EHCPs and conversions)** - the Council achieved the statutory deadline of 31/3/18 for the conversion of statements to EHCPs however this created a backlog in the processing of new cases from which the service has struggled to recover, combined with a further increase in demand for plans. The latest Q3 performance for processing of new plans is 43%, well below the target of 75%. A Performance Surgery will take place on 27 March 2019 and a peer challenge in June 2019.
- **Commence the transformation programme of adult commissioning** - phase 1 activity, including pre-payment cards and procurement of a direct payment support provider, were on track. Due to sickness absence, one of the major work streams has yet to commence (Quality and Assurance), however all other work streams are in progress. The work programme to be re-profiled as a result.
- **Progress the options appraisal for Leisure and Culture to present recommendations to Cabinet** - Significant work has been completed on this, including an options appraisal carried out by consultants, briefing councillors on the findings, exploring any benefits through Metro Strategy co-operation with Nottingham, and currently looking at options for operation of the New Assembly Rooms. A report will be prepared for CLT by May 2019 to inform/agree next steps that meet the current needs of the organisation with consultation with Cabinet during the summer.
- **Implement a commercial approach as part of a wider strategy to maximise income and manage demands.** A baseline assessment has been undertaken. An initial discussion took place at CLT in December 2018 with further development at CLT Away day in April. This has been identified as one of the MTFP themes going forward and will feature in the new Improvement Plan.

4.6 Over recent months, extensive work has taken place to develop a new strategic diagnostic for the Council including an assessment of current strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats based on evidence and insight. This will provide the basis for a new set of improvement priorities to align with the launch of the Council Plan for 2019/20 onwards. It is therefore proposed to close the Corporate Improvement Plan.

4.7 It is important that we do not lose sight of actions still in progress (showing either as 'on track' or 'some slippage'). A summary of these actions is shown below with the proposed route in terms of carry forward into the Diagnostic Improvement Plan, a delivery action in the new Council Plan or integration into business as usual.

Ref	CIP Action	Proposed follow-up
1.4	Continue to develop our approach to community engagement.	Carry forward
1.5	Explore options for introducing a four-yearly election cycle to Derby City Council.	Carry forward
2.4	Ensure risk assessments are used in the analysis of future financial impacts.	Carry forward
2.6	Review priorities in Council Plan for 2019/20.	Carry forward
5.8	Coordinate asset valuations programme for 18/19 and 19/20	Business as usual
6.1	Deliver improved managerial and leadership capacity by	Carry forward

	embedding the Leadership Behaviours through the delivery of the Professional Derby Manager Programme (PDM).	
6.2	Create a culture where staff feel valued and motivated and their well-being is a priority through the delivery of the Attendance Management Strategy	Carry forward
<b>Ref</b>	<b>CIP Action</b>	<b>Proposed follow-up</b>
6.3	Create a performance culture to drive productivity, improvement and innovation	Carry forward
6.4	Development and delivery of a Workforce Planning and Development Strategy, supporting the Council's People Strategy	Carry forward
7.6	Deliver comprehensive risk training for all Members, managers and budget holders.	Will be completed by April 2019
8.2	Develop information governance capability across the organisation.	Business as usual
8.8	Deliver programme of continuous IG improvements	Business as usual
9.2	Improve performance levels for Special Educational Needs (new EHCPs and conversions).	Business as usual
9.3	Develop a programme (with partners) to improve education outcomes for Derby's children and young people.	Council Plan
9.4	Commence the transformation programme of adult commissioning.	Carry forward
9.5	Progress the options appraisal for Leisure and Culture to present recommendations to Cabinet.	Council Plan
9.6	Complete the strategic review of Libraries, including the introduction of Community Managed Libraries.	Council Plan
10.1	Review the Delivering Differently programme to deliver a new approach to transformation.	Carry forward
10.2	Implement a commercial approach as part of a wider strategy to maximise income and manage demands.	Carry forward
10.3	Hold discussions with neighbouring authorities regarding opportunities for shared services / transfer of functions.	Carry forward
10.4	Improve the use of digital solutions through implementation of the Digital strategy (across city, council and workforce).	Carry forward
10.5	Deliver the 'Cashless Council' initiative.	Carry forward
10.6	Deliver the property rationalisation programme.	Carry forward

4.8 In addition, the LGA follow-up review in November 2018 suggested further actions which will be taken forward:

- **Relaunch the various codes of conduct (even if no changes are needed), with clear statements from councillors and officers of expected behaviours, supported by more awareness raising** – refreshed codes of conduct will be presented to the May 2019 AGM followed by communication to all councillors and colleagues.
- **Clarify expectations, agreed with councillors, of the timeliness of responses to their enquiries, casework etc** - this will be discussed with the informal Councillors Steering Group and communicated to colleagues by June 2019.
- **Work with councillors and officers to ensure expectations of advice, support and timeliness are met consistently and that councillor meetings are run and supported in the best way possible, so as to minimise the risk of this being a generator of any poor behaviour** – this will be reflected in the Councillor training programme for 2019/20.
- **Further work to remind officers of the roles of councillors, helping to**

**develop their political nous etc.** – this work is continuing.

- **Further steps to embed the confidence of officers that they will be taken seriously, and supported, if they have concerns about any councillor behaviour** – colleagues will be reminded that they can seek guidance from the Monitoring Officer where appropriate.
- **Work between officers and sometimes between officers and councillors to actively learn from situations where practice and behaviour has been sub optimal** – this will become a regular item at the Group Leader / Chief Executive meetings.

- 4.9 All relevant actions will be incorporated into the new Council Plan 2019/20-22/23 and Diagnostic Improvement Plan, which are expected to be approved by Cabinet during the summer of 2019. CLT will continue to receive regular monitoring reports to ensure effective oversight and challenge.

### **Public/stakeholder engagement**

- 5.1 CLT have received regular updates on the Corporate Improvement Plan. Executive Scrutiny Board received a presentation at the October 2018 meeting.

### **Other options**

- 6.1 Under the national sector led approach, all councils are expected to participate and respond to LGA peer challenge activity so it is not an option to do nothing.

### **Financial and value for money issues**

- 7.1 The LGA report published in December 2017 did point to capacity issues within the Council's corporate functions, including finance. This has now been addressed and the Council has made progress with respect to the Statement of Accounts sign off and other issues raised in the Section 24 report.

### **Legal implications**

- 8.1 None arising from this report.

### **Other significant implications**

- 9.1 None arising from this report.

**This report has been approved by the following people:**

<b>Role</b>	<b>Name</b>	<b>Date of sign-off</b>
<b>Legal Finance Service Director(s) Report sponsor</b>	Strategic Director of Corporate Resources	19/03/2019

<b>Other(s)</b>
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<b>Background papers:</b>
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<b>List of appendices:</b>
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Appendix 1 – Corporate Improvement Plan (Action Plan)
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