

Southampton City Council
2025 Corporate Peer Challenge progress report

Foreword from Cllr Alex Winning, Leader of Southampton City Council and Jillian Kay, Chief Executive

Southampton City Council is pleased to share this progress report following our Corporate Peer Challenge (CPC) earlier this year. The CPC provided us with invaluable insights and recommendations, and we have embraced the opportunity to reflect, learn, and act. Together with our partners, staff and residents, we have set a single clear vision for Southampton's future—one that is more equal, healthier, safer, greener, and economically vibrant.

Since January, we have made significant strides: adopting the Southampton 2035 City Plan and a new Corporate Plan, strengthening our commitment to equality, and driving transformation across the council. These plans are not just documents they are the foundation for how we work, engage, and deliver for our city.

Internally we have set out our aim to become a modern, financially sustainable council that makes life better for Southampton residents. We recognise that we still have far more to do but our progress to date is a testament to the dedication of our teams and the resilience of our community. As we look ahead, we remain focused on delivering the missions we have set, modernising the council, supporting our residents, and ensuring Southampton continues to thrive.

We look forward to hearing the CPC team's reflections on our progress over the past ten months, our ambitions for the future and our capacity as an organisation to deliver them.

Cllr Alex Winning
Leader of the Council

Jillian Kay
Chief Executive



Executive Summary – progress delivering Southampton City Council’s Corporate Peer Challenge action plan

Following the Corporate Peer Challenge in January 2025, Southampton City Council (SCC) grouped the 11 CPC recommendations under four themes and developed a realistic and targeted action plan to respond. We committed to learning as much as possible from the Corporate Peer Challenge process and to addressing each of the recommendations and wider points raised in the CPC in full.

The recommendations were grouped into four themes: Shaping our priorities, Transforming our council, People and culture, and Championing Southampton.

This report sets out in detail the progress we have made against each recommendation.

Key Progress Highlights:

- **Strategic Vision:** The council adopted the Southampton 2035 City Plan and a new SCC Corporate Plan, both developed with extensive partner and resident engagement. These plans set out five missions for the city and align council priorities with city-wide ambitions.
- **Equality, Diversity & Inclusion:** A new Equality Working Group has been established, with an equality improvement action plan under development and new equality objectives set and embedded in Corporate Plan outcomes.
- **Transformation:** Phase one of our transformation programme has delivered improved outcomes and financial benefits, including a balanced budget, increased reserves, and significant savings. Governance is being strengthened through our constitution review and improved audit processes.
- **People & Culture:** We have recruited key senior leaders, modernised HR policies, enhanced staff engagement, and launched leadership development programmes which are all contributing to culture change.
- **Growth & Partnerships:** Building on the launch of the Renaissance Vision, we are setting SCC’s first dedicated Growth and Prosperity Plan with a clear pipeline of ambitious projects, playing a leading role in the Mayoral Strategic Authority development, and strengthening relationships with strategic partners.

Key for action plan timeframes:

- **Short term** – April – July 2025
- **Medium term** – August – December 2025
- **Longer term** – 2026 onwards

Key for action plan RAG ratings:

- **Blue** – Complete
- **Green** – On track
- **Amber** – Delayed by progressing
- **Red** – Not progressed

Theme: Shaping our priorities

CPC Recommendation:

- **Recommendation 4: Develop and deliver a Corporate Plan with a clear vision and key priorities:**

Urgently develop and deliver a medium term sustainable Corporate Plan, with a clear vision and set of key priorities which are relevant to Southampton, underpinned by values and behaviours which are coproduced by staff, members, and partners. Ensure you have expert senior leadership in communications to lead engagement with residents and staff in shaping and telling the city story. Recognise your EDI responsibilities in this piece of work - make sure your priorities reflect the diversity of your population, unpinned by values and behaviours which are inclusive and coproduced by staff, members, and partners.

Change we've made since the CPC visit:

Develop and Agree new City and Corporate Plans

Following a period of significant change, the Council took an important step in July when it joined with partners across the city to agree the new Southampton 2035 City Plan and a new aligned SCC Corporate Plan. January's Corporate Peer Challenge, highlighted the importance of having a clear vision and priorities for both the city and council - together the City and Corporate Plans provide a strong foundation and a new golden thread for the organisation.

The Southampton 2035 City Plan was developed with our partners and built on the feedback from almost 4,000 residents who shared their views on priorities for the city through our City Survey. The Plan sets out five missions for Southampton to collectively work towards over the coming decade – an overarching goal to create a more Equal city, and four specific missions to make Southampton a Healthier, Safer, Greener and Grow our economy.

The new three year SCC Corporate Plan directly supports delivery of the Southampton 2035 missions, adopting these as the council's target outcomes alongside modernising the way we work.

Recognise EDI Responsibilities

Creating a more Equal Southampton flows through our corporate plan both in our updated equality objectives but also through each of our wider outcomes. To raise the profile and drive the progress of our equality work, a new Equality Working Group has been set up with representatives from each Directorate, employee resource groups and trade unions, chaired by a member of Management Board.

Communicate Vision and Priorities

The new Corporate and City Plans have been widely communicated with colleagues and embedded in processes across the council. New performance and business planning frameworks have been adopted to ensure the council is transparent and accountable for how we do our part delivering the city missions.

The adoption of the two plans was also a sign of increased stability in the organisation, being supported despite changes to the political and corporate leadership of the council late in the development process.

Agree and Submit a Proposal for Local Government Reorganisation

Alongside organisational priority setting, a significant amount of capacity has been invested in collaborating with residents, partners and neighbouring councils, on the submission of our preferred Local Government Reorganisation proposal. With SCC on the devolution fast-track programme, the development of our potential successor council is likely to be an increasing focus in 2026/27. Our Corporate Plan has been shaped with this in mind and runs to 2028, the point at which we expect LGR to take effect.

Review Communications and Engagement

The Corporate Peer Challenge also highlighted the importance of ensuring we communicate effectively and hear the voice of our residents. Since January the council has reshaped the leadership of the Communications service with a new Director responsible for Strategy and Communications, and a new Head of Communications taking up their roles in the summer. A communications strategy and improvement plan are under development. Work is also underway with the Voluntary, Community and Social Enterprise (VCSE) sector on a new localised covenant. With a focus on delivering our Southampton 2035 missions, the covenant will set out the shared commitments and ways of working between the sector and council. Increasing resident engagement is reflected as a priority in our new Corporate Plan and will be particularly important in the context of Local Government Reorganisation.

Action plan progress

Action	Timeframe	Lead Officer	RAG rating	Progress to date and next steps
Finalise the new Southampton 2035 City Plan with our partners setting out a collective vision and set of core missions for Southampton City over the coming decade.	Short term	Director of Strategy and Communications	Complete	<p>The Southampton 2035 City Plan was adopted by the council and our strategic partners in July. Based on feedback from almost 4,000 residents through our City Survey, the plan sets out our ten-year collective commitment to create a more Equal, Healthier, Safer, Greener and Growing Southampton over the next decade.</p> <p>Each specific mission of the Plan is owned by one of the city's partnership Boards with an initial set of outcome based KPIs and key actions established.</p>
Develop a new Corporate Plan in collaboration with staff and Members, and reflecting resident feedback from the recent City Survey, setting out how the council will contribute to	Short term	Director of Strategy and	Complete	Building on the five Southampton 2035 missions, a new SCC Corporate Plan was also agreed by Council in July. The Corporate Plan is directly framed around

<p>delivering the Southampton 2035 missions, the Adapt Grow Thrive transformation plan and Administration priorities, and setting out refreshed equality objectives.</p>		<p>Communications</p>		<p>the five City Plan missions and an internal enabling outcome to become a modern, financially sustainable council that makes lives better for residents. The Corporate Plan brings together improvement, transformation and statutory service delivery priorities as well as setting new equality objectives for the organisation.</p>
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Theme: Transforming our council

CPC Recommendations:

- **Recommendation 1: Reflect, learn and celebrate the progress made from the 'Adapt' phase of your transformation programme:**
Reflect, recognise and celebrate the progress made over the last 12 months and make sure that is secured and consolidated. Understand the learning from the council's transformation plan's 'Adapt' phase, before moving onto the 'Grow' stage of your transformation journey. Keep up the momentum and stick to the plans for transformation/savings.
- **Recommendation 3: Agree the parameters that will trigger your Improvement Board's exit strategy:**
Agree with the Improvement Board an objective set of parameters that trigger their exit strategy at the appropriate time.
- **Recommendation 7: Urgently drive improvements in governance:**
Urgently drive improvements in governance and decision making to solidify the future stability and growth of the organisation with a fast-paced plan that shows clear accountability. This will also attract inward investment to the city.
- **Recommendation 10: Work with the Improvement Board to tackle the housing challenge:**
Don't underestimate how difficult the housing challenge is. Work with the Improvement Board to improve member oversight, create capacity so that services are equipped to drive stepped change and tangible improvement. This will require organisational change.
- **Recommendation 11: Resolve issues with the audit of your accounts:**
Dedicate resources across the council to ensure issues with the audit of the 2023/24 accounts are not repeated in future years and that Value for Money judgements do not indicate significant weakness particularly around housing.

Change we've made since the CPC visit:

Transformation

The adapt | grow | thrive programme has already delivered improved outcomes and financial benefits since its adoption in July 2024. The success of the Transformation Programme to-date has played a key role in our ability to not only set a balanced budget for 2025/26, but across the Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) period to 2028/29. Savings expectations from transformation activity of £34.5m are assumed in the current year's budget (2025/26), and the contribution transformation savings will make is currently expected to rise to over £50m by the end of the MTFS period, exceeding original expectations. As well as improving our financial position, positive progress has been made in delivering significantly improved outcomes for our residents and service users which has led to:

- 23 new homes being purchased to reduce the need for emergency accommodation
- 30% fewer children in residential care
- 168 fewer adults admitted into residential and nursing care each year.
- Implementation of the Housing Improvement Plan, and drafting of a Growth and Prosperity Delivery Plan

Whilst it is right that we acknowledge and celebrate the progress we have made to-date, we will not slow the pace of change or move away from our transformation objectives.

Agree parameters of Improvement Board

Over the past 10 months the council's voluntary Improvement Board has moved into a new phase with Rob Whiteman taking the chair and the council increasingly taking the lead in setting the agenda for its own improvement. After setting jointly agreed criteria for the Board's exit earlier this year, we provided a progress update in September where it was agreed that the Improvement Board would be stood down by the end of this year.

Drive Improvements in Governance

We have made improvements to Governance this year with CfGS (supported by the LGA) leading a review alongside the Director of Legal and Governance. We have done this in conjunction with a cross-party member working group and an officer working group to ensure inclusivity and that we understand any political sensitivities.

We are also conducting a formal review of the Constitution and all its components; this has resulted in a significant streamlining of the Constitution which will make it easier to navigate. The other workstream was a review of the current complex and duplicatory "informal" decision making and consultation processes, and how they link into Cabinet Member Briefings (CMBs) to ensure consistency of approach. The objective is to standardise what is considered on agendas and to achieve a more streamlined model.

Both are pieces of work are ongoing but a full report will be taken to Council in November to adopt a revised core Constitution. A roll out and support plan is being developed with both HR and Learning and Development colleagues with support from and the communications team in anticipation of adoption later this year.

In addition, the decision-making report template has been revised to include a requirement for more explicit narrative regarding the new Corporate Plan and how the report proposals link to those objectives together with a greater focus on health implications.

Addressing Challenges in Housing

We have commissioned a delivery partner in Transform UK, to provide capability and capacity to help deliver the housing transformation programme. This work is progressing well, including the establishment of a new Tenant Insight Panel to give tenants and leaseholders a greater voice in decisions about housing. At our Annual General Meeting (AGM) in May 2025 a Housing Scrutiny Committee was established with a mandate to undertake scrutiny of our housing services, including the housing landlord function and the housing regeneration programme.

Improve Audit and Risk Management

Building on the success of the transformation programme, the Council set a balanced budget in February 2025 without reliance on Exceptional Financial Support, and increased the General Fund Reserve to £12M. Governance has been strengthened through enhanced audit and risk management processes, including a new internal audit tracker and quarterly reporting to the Audit Committee, which includes deep dives into specific areas such as the Temporary Accommodation Action Plan. The tracker has led to a 20% rise in completed audit actions year-on-year. The percentage of internal audit recommendations completed are now

tracked as KPIs and reported to Cabinet. We have also established an internal governance framework that includes the creation and monitoring of deficit recovery plans to address forecast adverse variances.

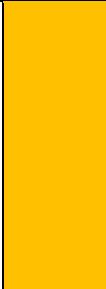

Directorate Risk Registers have been established to improve transparency and identify cross-cutting risks. Strategic risk reporting to the Audit Committee now occurs bi-annually, with improved Cabinet engagement in development. We will also present an updated Risk Strategy to the Audit Committee in Q4 of 2025/26. A ‘Finance Essentials’ training programme will launch in Autumn 2025 to support budget holders. Additionally, we have created a Housing Improvement Board and Scrutiny Panel to enhance financial oversight in housing services’.

The Council’s external auditors will report to management on their Value for Money commentary for 2024/25 by the end of November. It is expected that this will reflect progress made against the recommendations raised in 2022/23 and 2023/24.

Action plan progress

Action	Timeframe	Lead Officer	RAG rating	Progress to date and next steps
<p>Develop the next phase of our Adapt Grow Thrive transformation programme building on the successes and lessons from phase one.</p> <p>Ensure that the programme is visible and well communicated so that staff understand its importance, purpose and the impact it is having.</p>	Medium term	Director of Transformation		<p>Building on the successes and lessons from phase one, the Council is actively shaping the next phase of its Adapt Grow Thrive Transformation Programme. The programme is evolving to focus on thematic areas such as Prevention and Early Intervention, Customer and Digital Experience, and Growth, with underpinning business cases in development. These priorities will align with the new City Plan and Corporate Plan, while also considering the implications of Local Government Reorganisation. Continued focus on People and Culture remains essential to support staff and sustain transformation in the face of rising service demand.</p> <p>Efforts to ensure the Transformation Programme is well understood and valued across the organisation are ongoing. A communications plan is being developed in collaboration with the newly appointed Strategy and Communications Director and Head of Communications, with the aim of clearly articulating the City Plan and Corporate Plan alongside the</p>

				<p>programme’s purpose, importance, and the positive impact on the council to date. This will include targeted internal updates, staff briefings, and visual storytelling to highlight successes and future progress.</p>
<p>Maximise the impact and benefit drawn from the SCC Improvement Board before it is stood down in December 2025.</p> <p>Build on the experience of working with the Improvement Board to embed a culture of learning from, adopting and sharing best practice within the local government sector.</p>	Medium term	Chief Executive		<p>We have continued to draw upon the expertise and advice of the Improvement Board with an agreed end point set for December 2025. Throughout this period we have begun to see the benefits of the pace and scope of change it is driving including balancing our budget and putting in place the foundations of our future improvement through improved culture and governance.</p> <p>On housing, we will continue to be supported beyond December by the Improvement Board member for housing, Pamela Leonce, as chair of our Tenants Insight Panel. The Tenant Insight Panel is a new independent group established to give tenants and leaseholders a greater voice in shaping the future of council housing across the city.</p> <p>We have continued to welcome support from the Local Government Association (LGA) including facilitating separate Cabinet and Management Team away days to develop leadership approaches. We are committed to continuing to seek and welcome external support and best practice though the LGA and others as we continue our improvement.</p> <p>The Chief Executive is participating in the new Solace Chief Executive Foundation programme to support her own leadership development and sector network and promote a culture of continuing professional development.</p>

<p>Streamline the council’s governance arrangements including completing the update of the Constitution, improving internal governance processes to reduce duplication and enable agile decision making, and increasing forward planning.</p>	<p>Medium term</p>	<p>Director of Legal and Governance</p>		<p>The formal review of the Constitution and all its component parts has resulted in a streamlining of the Constitution which will make it easier to navigate. A review of the current complex and duplicatory “informal” decision making and consultation processes has also been undertaken this work will continue into 2026 to ensure the new processes are fully embedded.</p>
<p>Drive improvements in our housing service to improve customer service and ensure tenants have a voice in decision-making, invest in SCC managed properties including meeting the decent homes standard on all possible properties and put residents at the heart of a new Housing Strategy to meet the housing needs of the city through a single vision for landlord functions, housing supply, regulation and homelessness prevention.</p>	<p>Medium term</p>	<p>Director of Housing</p>		<p>Safety and Quality Standards: actions and recovery plans have been completed and performance is good, with plans underway to improve Electrical Installation Condition Report compliance and deal with Housing Health and Safety Rating System hazards.</p> <p>Transparency, Influence and Accountability Standard:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Customer Segmentation survey being undertaken by Acuity to help SCC to better understand Tenants’ needs. b. Tenant Insight Panel Set-up. c. Improvements made to accessibility of information, including updates to website and communications, d. Complaint handling improvements being made, including service mapping with customers, better training for staff, improved governance, co-ordination and digital systems. <p>Neighbourhood and Community Standard:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Anti-social behaviour initiatives underway b. Customer and Communities First Project underway. <p>Tenancy Standard: SCC continue to meet Tenancy Standards, assured through governance.</p>

				<p>Develop, implement and publish a new Housing Strategy.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Drafted in collaboration with leaders and aligned to corporate and city plans. b. Out for public consultation until 21 September 25, with final Cabinet sign-off planned for January 2026. c. Publication due in early 2026. <p>Develop, implement and publish a new five year asset management strategy informed by a new 30 year HRA business plan.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Extensive work undertaken to understand asset stock, including programme of re-surveying and updating our asset database. b. Tactical asset modelling work undertaken with ARK to facilitate decision making with housing assets, now complete. c. A 6-18 month project is underway to support driving of improvements to our Social Housing Stock, especially around improving Decent Homes performance. d. Housing Asset Management Strategy in development, due to be complete by March 2026. e. A new 40 year HRA business plan model has been developed which enables modelling of the impact of acquisitions and disposals and will inform the updated HRA business plan to be approved by Council in February 2026.
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Theme: People and Culture

CPC Recommendations:

- **Recommendation 2: Recognise and mitigate the risk around your chief executive appointment and align senior management recruitment timescales:** Recognise the inherent risk around the chief executive recruitment process and mitigate this. Align future senior recruitment with timescales that allow the future chief executive to own the organisational structure. Create a strategy for stabilisation and retention to reduce current levels of churn.
- **Recommendation 8: Drive your organisational development function, your culture change and customer service programmes at pace:** Centrally drive at pace the organisational development function and culture change and customer service programmes so there is a consistent approach which is realised across all services

Change we've made since the CPC visit:

We have driven significant progress in modernising and strengthening our HR processes since January. This has focussed on improving employee relations case management, timescales for resolution, fairness, and enabling more effective service delivery across the council.

To date, this has included:

- **Successfully recruiting our new Chief Executive and Executive Director for Resident Services.** We now have an enhanced in-house recruitment team and job roles have been benchmarked to ensure they're competitive within the wider labour market. As a result, both recruitment campaigns received a number of strong applications. The new Chief Executive was in-post by April to oversee the development and publication of the new Corporate Plan in July.
- **Reaching an agreed equal pay settlement related to task and finish with recognised trade unions.** The trade unions will recommend this settlement to their members, and if staff agree to it, we are on track for the litigation to be settled by March 2026.
- **Programme of "Colleague Connect" sessions** during Spring 2025 - both in person and online, in small groups and one-to-one sessions across our main locations. The sessions were designed to elicit both positive and negative feedback from staff, in confidence, which could be incorporated into our evolving People & Culture plan. This will now be built upon through our further all-staff in-depth employee survey which launched 21 October 2025. This benchmarks against past survey scores, and enables staff to give anonymous verbatim feedback. The results are split by Directorate so that management teams can act on the findings.
- **Designing three brand new leadership development programmes**, the first of which is well underway, "leadership essentials". This has received exceptionally positive feedback and is helping to drive culture change within the organisation by embedding brilliant leadership basics across the workforce.
- **Conducting a comprehensive review and rewrite of our HR policies and procedures** to reflect a more modern, pragmatic and compassionate approach to managing employee relations. By working with trade union colleagues and reviewing previous cases to better understand themes and trends, policies and processes now have a stronger emphasis on early and informal engagement and intervention and are designed to support colleagues more effectively, help them return to work sooner and feel valued throughout their employment journey.

- **Strengthening our strategic engagement and ways of working with trade union colleagues** via fortnightly meetings focussed on an agreed workplan for continuous improvement. This has included reviewing HR policies and processes such as our Health and Safety Policy and Organisational Change Policy. These meetings are accompanied by a formal six-month HR Policy Review meeting, with the next one scheduled for March 2026.
- **Successfully implementing a new employee relations tracker** to provide real-time data to inform decision making. Data is now integrated into a Power BI dashboard to enable HR Business Partners to engage more strategically with directorates on key issues such as absence management interventions, improving culture work and service transformation. The ability to analyse trends and respond proactively is already enhancing our approach to workforce planning and support to managers.
- **Embedding regular people and organisation culture service-wide meetings** to serve as a valuable forum for sharing best practise, embedding learning through continuous improvement, providing updates on workstreams and organisational priorities, and building a stronger, more connected and proactive HR team.
- **Investment in the training of two officers to lead on strategic workforce planning.** This will go hand in hand with our new operating model for People and Culture that aims to support the organisation to deliver both our City and Corporate Plans and build a financially stable council that continually looks to improve and transform to make a difference to the lives on residents, businesses and communities in the city.

Moving forward, we are committed to continue improving the consistency of HR advice and decision making and supporting managers to use early intervention and de-escalation. This will improve colleague accountability, inclusivity, engagement by continuously improving organisational and individual learning as we foster a one council approach to enhance trust and openness.

Action plan progress:

Action	Timeframe	Lead Officer	RAG rating	Progress to date and next steps
Develop a new holistic People and Culture strategy which drives improvements including to staff engagement, learning and development, recruitment, equality, diversity and inclusion, and organisational culture.	Short term	Director of People and Culture		While slightly delayed, work is well underway to co-create and produce a new People and Culture strategy, with an initial draft currently in development. We want to ensure the new strategy reflects the organisation's shared strategic vision as it continues to embed itself and aim to complete this shortly.
Investigate historic exit interviews of senior executives including tenure and identify trends and themes for high turnover. A retention plan will be developed aligned to the People and Culture strategy.	Short term	Director of People and Culture		Initial investigation has been completed, with instability in the wider team, financial challenges and a lack of strategic vision being cited. We have strengthened our reward framework for senior executives and as set out above, work is well underway to produce a new People and Culture strategy that will include a focus on the retention of staff.

Theme: Championing Southampton

CPC Recommendations:

- **Recommendation 5: Develop a delivery plan for growth:** It is essential to develop and deliver a clear plan for growth that draws together housing growth and renewal, connectivity, land use and skills with an appropriately resourced delivery plan.
- **Recommendation 6: Lead and embrace government agencies and investors to help deliver growth outcomes for Southampton:** Lead and embrace, but also hold to account, government agencies, anchor institutions and investors for helping to delivering growth outcomes for Southampton. A focused growth plan is one tool.
- **Recommendation 9: Create a confident and an externally facing culture:** Move away from being an insular organisation. Be confident and embed an externally facing culture. As leaders of place seek good practice, learning from others to raise Southampton's regional, national, and international profile. This should be driven by both the senior political and officer leadership.

Change we've made since the CPC visit:

We have progressed, at pace, key areas that support delivery of each of the three recommendations in this area including: - playing a leading role in the establishment of the new MCCA; developing our first dedicated Growth Plan; and accelerating delivery of key regeneration initiatives while taking strengthening internal and external capacity (to be further enhanced through a directorate transformation process).

Develop a delivery Plan for Growth

The Council will be adopting its first dedicated growth plan at the November Cabinet meeting following extensive work over recent months. The Growth and Prosperity Plan will set out our ambition and delivery framework to shape growth and investment opportunities which will realise a more equal, healthier, and greener city.

To deliver this vision, we have identified a clear set of objectives and priorities grouped under three core themes: People & Partnerships, Place, and Infrastructure. Together, these priorities will lay the foundations for Southampton's long-term future, bringing together regeneration, housing, transport, sustainability, culture, investment and skills into a joined-up programme for delivery. Accelerating progress in these areas will be key to strengthening Southampton's economy, creating a pipeline of investment, and guiding decision making to ensure that purposeful growth is designed in from day one. It will also ensure that communities across the city benefit from and can access the opportunities created by Southampton and in partnership with the future Hampshire and the Solent MCCA and city partners.

The Growth & Prosperity Plan sets out a coherent and practical framework to guide collective action, providing clarity on the council's ambitions for the city and how these will be realised through delivery. Those priorities are captured in a project pipeline with full business cases to follow at the point the plan is adopted. Within the pipeline are programmes and projects that have immediate high impact, both in a city context and as areas of focus that will drive regional growth (and should therefore be considered by the new MCCA).

A directorate re-design blueprint is also nearing completion which is seeking to align and transform service provision. Using the Growth and Prosperity Plan as the ‘north star’ (with objectives and priorities clearly stated) a new transformative structure (with the right capacity and capabilities in the right places) will ensure that there is laser like focus on those areas of work that will most significantly progress the growth agenda.

Take a Leading Role in the Establishment of the Mayoral County Combined Authority (MCCA)

Southampton City Councils Management Board have been closely involved in the development of the overarching programme for the establishment of the new Hampshire and the Solent MCCA, including as chair of the MCCA portfolio board (made up of senior officers across the Upper Tier Local Authorities) that is overseeing all programme activity across the themes and areas required to establish the new authority. Using the emerging Growth and Prosperity Plan as the guide (as below), we are also ensuring the city growth aspirations are aligned directly to the aims and objectives of the new MCCA from day one.

Create a Confident and Externally Facing Culture

The Renaissance Masterplan was launched in February 2025. Since then, significant work has been undertaken to move that vision into a defined delivery context. SCC and the Renaissance Board are now being supported by a nationally recognised Strategic Development Advisor partner, and the process of site prioritisation is well advanced. Concurrently, work is happening to develop and consider partnership delivery models to accelerate progress on making real the aspirations set out in the Masterplan. We attended MIPIM (In March), UKREiiF (in May), and EXPO Real (in October) to showcase the Masterplan and promote the major investment opportunities that exist. In doing so, SCC were front and centre in panel sessions, presentations and discussions which showcased the city's (and region's potential for regeneration and growth).

We have also been working with the Southampton Renaissance Board to take forward its ambitions to review its structure and membership to maintain momentum and maximise impact. In September the board agreed a plan to create a series of working groups with a focus on; skills jobs and opportunities, energy, net zero and sustainability and investment, regeneration and innovation. This new structure once in place will support improved relationships with strategic partners such as Homes England as well as to improve the diversity of the board and its links to the community and voluntary sector

Action plan progress:

Action	Timeframe	Lead Officer	RAG rating	Progress to date and next steps
Complete the development of a Growth and Prosperity Plan which sets out a single approach to delivering economic growth in Southampton and aligns with our emerging Local Plan and Housing Strategy.	Medium term	Executive Director of Growth and Prosperity		Over the last 6 months, work has been underway to develop a Growth and Prosperity Plan for Southampton. The plan builds on the foundations of the new City and Corporate Plans as well as national policy, the emerging local plan and the Southampton

				<p>Renaissance Vision . The plan is based around three themes, People and Partnerships, Place and Infrastructure.</p> <p>The plan is due to be agreed by Cabinet in November.</p>
<p>Play a leading role in the establishment and operation of the new Hampshire and the Solent Mayoral Combined County Authority to ensure it reflects, understands and supports Southampton’s priorities for growth.</p>	<p>Longer term</p>	<p>Executive Director of Growth and Prosperity</p>		<p>The Growth and Prosperity plan will ensure that Southampton’s priorities are visible, actionable, and will be embedded in the wider regional settlement.</p> <p>To make sure Southampton is able to benefit from the new MCCA five priority areas have been identified to make sure there are a series of projects that are well positioned within the MCCA’s initial pipeline of priorities (as well as having a direct city benefit).</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Housing led regeneration and activities to tackle housing need while supporting neighbourhood regeneration. 2. Delivery of priority sites within the Renaissance Masterplan 3. Delivery of a high frequency mass rapid transport to connect key employment areas 4. Invest in cultural and creative infrastructure 5. Accelerate development of strategic and renewable energy infrastructure
<p>Improve our approach to communications and engagement to ensure we are best set to hear the voice of our residents, to champion and celebrate our city’s diversity and to communicate the story and priorities of</p>	<p>Medium term</p>	<p>Director of Strategy and Communications</p>		<p>A new Head of Communications and Director of Strategy and Communications were appointed in the summer and have begun to develop a communications strategy and improvement plan for the organisation which will drive this work. This</p>

both the council and the city of Southampton more widely.				will include a specific strand focused on championing and telling the story of Southampton. The Southampton 2035 City Plan provides the basis for communications on the shared objectives of Southampton’s strategic partners and major organisations. Relationships with strategic partner communication teams are being strengthened to increase opportunities for shared city narratives and promotion.
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Supporting documents:

No.	Document	Comments
1	Southampton City Council Corporate Plan	
2	Southampton 2035 City Plan	
3	Southampton Growth and Prosperity Plan	Draft
4	Southampton Renaissance Vision	
5	Housing Strategy	Draft (pre-consultation)
6	DRAFT Equalities Working Group ToR	Draft
7	LGR Submission	Link to web page
8	Transformation Update July 2025	
9	Corporate Performance Report Q1	Q1 24-25 Slide deck
10	Housing Improvement Plan	