

<b>DECISION-MAKER:</b>	Cabinet
<b>SUBJECT:</b>	LGA Corporate Peer Challenge progress review
<b>DATE OF DECISION:</b>	27 January 2026
<b>REPORT OF:</b>	<b>COUNCILLOR ALEX WINNING LEADER OF THE COUNCIL</b>
<b>CORPORATE PLAN OUTCOMES AND PRIORITIES</b>	<b>Outcome:</b> A modern, financially sustainable council that makes lives better for residents
	<b>Priority:</b> Transform to become a financially sustainable, efficient council.

<b><u>CONTACT DETAILS</u></b>		
<b>Executive Director</b>	<b>Title</b>	Chief Executive
	<b>Name:</b>	Jillian Kay
	<b>E-mail:</b>	<a href="mailto:Jillian.Kay@Southampton.gov.uk">Jillian.Kay@Southampton.gov.uk</a>
<b>Author:</b>	<b>Title</b>	Director of Strategy and Communications
	<b>Name:</b>	David Courcoux
	<b>E-mail:</b>	<a href="mailto:David.Courcoux@Southampton.gov.uk">David.Courcoux@Southampton.gov.uk</a>

<b>STATEMENT OF CONFIDENTIALITY</b>	
N/A	
<b>BRIEF SUMMARY</b>	
<p><b>Following Southampton City Council's January 2025 Corporate Peer Challenge (CPC) by the Local Government Association (LGA), an action plan was agreed to address each of the 11 CPC recommendations.</b></p> <p>On 19 November 2025, the CPC conducted a progress review visit to Southampton to provide feedback on the progress made by the council to date. This report sets out the CPC team's findings as well as the council's own self-assessment against the action plan priorities ahead of the progress review visit.</p>	
<b>RECOMMENDATIONS:</b>	
	(i) To note the LGA Corporate Peer Challenge progress review report set out at Appendix 1
<b>REASONS FOR REPORT RECOMMENDATIONS</b>	
1.	The Local Government Association Corporate Peer Challenge process requires that the CPC progress review report is published by the council.
<b>ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED AND REJECTED</b>	
2.	The council is required to publish the CPC progress review report. Whilst it is not a requirement to present these at a Cabinet meeting, the option of publishing the CPC progress review report on the Council's website without

	Cabinet consideration was rejected as it does not provide the same level of transparency and opportunity for learning from the CPC process.
<b>DETAIL AND EVIDENCE (Including consultation carried out)</b>	
3.	The Local Government Association (LGA) carried out a Corporate Peer Challenge (CPC) for Southampton City Council in January 2025. The CPC process is a flagship sector-led improvement programme bringing together a diverse team of experienced Member and Officer peers to review key documents and information ahead of spending four days at the council meeting with key figures and providing robust challenge and support.
4.	In 2024, Best Value Guidance issued by the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (now the Ministry for Housing Communities and Local Government), included an expectation that:  <i>“all local authorities to have a corporate or finance peer challenge at least every 5 years, to publish the outcomes and deliver on the recommendations of that review, and to complete a progress review within a year.”</i>
5.	The January 2025 CPC report set out 11 recommendations which the council responded to with a targeted action plan agreed at Cabinet in May that year. Copies of the full CPC report and the agreed SCC action plan are available at Appendix 3 and 4 respectively.
6.	As part of the CPC process, the peer team returned to the council on 19 November 2025 to conduct a Progress Review visit and provide feedback on the action plan delivery to date.
7.	The Progress Review is a key part of the CPC process. Taking place approximately ten months after the CPC, it is designed to provide space for the council’s senior leadership to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Receive feedback from peers on the early progress made by the council against the CPC recommendations and the council’s RAG rated CPC Action Plan.</li> <li>• Consider peers’ reflections on any new opportunities or challenges that may have arisen since the peer team were ‘on-site’ including any further support needs</li> <li>• Discuss any early impact or learning from the progress made to date</li> </ul>

	<p>As part of the Progress Review, the council provided an update report setting out a self-assessment of the progress it had made delivering the action plan. The report gives red, amber, green (RAG) ratings for each of the specific actions and provides a narrative update on each of the four themes of the action plan:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Shaping our priorities</li> <li>- Transforming our council</li> <li>- People and Culture</li> <li>- Championing Southampton</li> </ul> <p>A copy of the SCC self-assessment update report is available at Appendix 2.</p>
8.	During the Progress Review visit, the peer team held meetings with the Leader of the Council, the Chief Executive, Executive Directors and relevant Directors. Four roundtable sessions were also held, one on each of the action plan themes, presenting the progress made to date and giving peers the opportunity for questions and challenge.
9.	Following the Progress Review visit the CPC team provided a short report on its findings which is available at Appendix 1.
10.	The report highlights the progress the council has made since the original CPC visit in January 2025 and indicates a number of areas for continued focus and consideration.
11.	While the council (or its successor organisation) will not require a CPC until 2030, it will continue to draw upon the LGA's sector-led improvement offer and to deliver and build on the priorities set out the in CPC action plan and Progress Review report, many of which were incorporated into the SCC Corporate Plan agreed in July 2025.
12.	To ensure transparency, the CPC Progress Review report will be published on the council's website and discussed at Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee on 5 Feb 2025.
<b>RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS</b>	
<b><u>Capital/Revenue</u></b>	
13.	The action plan activities will be delivered within agreed resources in the Council's MTFS.
<b><u>Property/Other</u></b>	
14.	None
<b>LEGAL IMPLICATIONS</b>	
<b><u>Statutory power to undertake proposals in the report:</u></b>	
15.	Section 111 Local Government Act 1972 and S1 Localism Act 2011
<b><u>Other Legal Implications:</u></b>	
16.	None
<b>RISK MANAGEMENT IMPLICATIONS</b>	
17.	None
<b>POLICY FRAMEWORK IMPLICATIONS including STRATEGIC IMPACT</b>	
18.	None

<b>KEY DECISION?</b>	No	
<b>WARDS/COMMUNITIES AFFECTED:</b>	All	
<u>SUPPORTING DOCUMENTATION</u>		
<b>Appendices</b>		
1.	LGA Corporate Peer Challenge Progress Review report - SCC	
2.	Southampton City Council CPC Action Plan update report on progress	
3.	LGA Corporate Peer Challenge report 2025 – SCC	
4.	Southampton City Council Corporate Peer Challenge Action Plan	
<b>Documents In Members' Rooms</b>		
1.	None	
<b>EQUALITY AND SAFETY IMPACT ASSESSMENT</b>		
Do the implications/subject of the report require an Equality and Safety Impact Assessment (ESIA) to be carried out.		No
<b>DATA PROTECTION IMPACT ASSESSMENT</b>		
Do the implications/subject of the report require a Data Protection Impact Assessment (DPIA) to be carried out.		No
<b>Other Background Documents</b>		
Other Background documents available for inspection at:		
<b>Title of Background Paper(s)</b>		<b>Relevant Paragraph of the Access to Information Procedure Rules / Schedule 12A allowing document to be Exempt/Confidential (if applicable)</b>
1.	<a href="#">May 2025 Cabinet report: LGA Corporate Peer Challenge report and action plan</a>	N/A
2.		