

LGA Corporate Peer Challenge – Progress Review

Chippenham Town Council

20 November 2025

Feedback



Corporate Peer Challenge



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1. Introduction

The council undertook an LGA Corporate Peer Challenge (CPC) during 28 – 30 January 2025 and promptly published the [full report with an action plan](#).

The Progress Review is an integral part of the Corporate Peer Challenge process. Taking place approximately ten months after the CPC, it is designed to provide space for the council's senior leadership to:

- 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.
- 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
- Discuss any early impact or learning from the progress made to date

The LGA would like to thank Chippenham Town Council (CTC) for their commitment to sector led improvement. This Progress Review was the next step in an ongoing, open and close relationship that the council has with LGA sector support.

2. Summary of the approach

The Progress Review at CTC took place (onsite) on 20 November 2025

The Progress Review focussed on each of the recommendations from the Corporate Peer Challenge, as set out in Section Three.

For this Progress Review, the following members of the original CPC team were involved:

- Cllr Mike Drew – Yate Town Council
- Ian Morris – Chief Officer, Spennymoor Town Council
- Kathryn Trant - Peer Challenge Manager, Local Government Association

3. Progress Review - Feedback

Out of the CPC's eight recommendations, the council's RAG rated Action plan reports that 100 per cent are completed or progressed.

The council is committed to continuous improvement and is a credit to the Parish and Town Council sector. The following comments relate specifically to the recommendations and action plan.

3.1. Communication and Engagement Strategy

CTC has developed a new Communication and Engagement Policy which was approved by the council's Strategy and Resources Committee in September 2025. The policy reflects some of the existing positive work that the council undertakes with various strategic and community partners. The peer team felt the example shared of the survey to support development of the Corporate Plan was positive, particularly in that it was followed up by a workshop where members of the public who had responded to the survey were invited to discuss their priorities for Chippenham.

A good practice example of the coordination role of the council is the Community Safety Forum which continues to be an innovative engagement vehicle that brings a diverse range of groups and organisations together for the good of the town.

Next steps will see the policy for the basis and communication and engagement moving forward as the new Corporate Plan is introduced in 2026.

3.2. Performance Management Framework

Performance monitoring reports are now presented in a more visual format to make them more easily understood as per the recommendation in the CPC report. As the Corporate Plan is introduced, new performance measures will be needed to monitor the actions that the council will undertake to achieve the identified priorities. The corporate management team have committed to reviewing the framework alongside the development of the new Corporate Plan.

Managers and staff look forward to the opportunity to contribute to the new framework with suggestions of appropriate and relevant service performance indicators that can be embedded into service and team plans.

3.3. Equality, Diversity and Inclusion data

Some progress has been made against this recommendation. Councillors and staff have received or will receive EDI training and there are plans for a new Equalities Impact consideration as part of the standard council and committee report template to ensure that conscious consideration of equality issues is included in council decisions.

It was noted by the review team that the 2025 citizen survey (Chippenham Town Survey) did not collect any equalities monitoring data that would enable analysis of the results to include equalities considerations (e.g. are any particular equalities groups under or over-represented in the survey results?). The Council could usefully ask for this data to be included in future research activity.

Whilst the council does not formally collect equalities data of staff, CMT are confident that any requests for relevant support for staff with protected characteristics would be addressed.

3.4. Reassess the culture of the organisation and Include officers in a refresh of values

All staff were invited to participate in a workshop to develop a new set of values for CTC. The peer team were impressed with the enthusiasm displayed by those staff who took part in the workshop which resulted in new values for the organisation – Support, Integrity, Respect, Reliability and Innovate. These will be formally launched once design work has been completed. It is positive that the council has committed to amend recruitment and appraisal processes in line with the new values.

With the refresh of values complete, the council has engaged an external organisation to help embed the new values and develop the wider culture of the council. This will start with Heads of Service attending a workshop in the new year.

3.5. Review the Human Resources policy framework

A review and refresh of HR policies was undertaken earlier in the year. The council has committed to a further review once the work on organisational culture has been completed. This will be vital in ensuring that the values really do permeate and help to reinforce the positive culture of the council.

3.6. Review internal communications

The peer team heard of some innovative new ways of approaching internal communications including the recently launched staff intranet site that has an all-staff group as well as 'site specific' areas. The council arranged an all-staff summer event to promote team building and the staff we spoke to were overwhelmingly positive about the opportunity to genuinely participate in cross-organisational work and they reflected examples of the benefits of taking part.

An extended management team away day in January will be an excellent opportunity for the heads of service to bring their ideas and input into the further development and improvement of internal communications.

3.7. Continue with robust forecasting of income and expenditure

The recommendation relating to finance was to continue the positive work that was taking place. Income and expenditure continue to be monitored by regular reports to Strategy and Resources committee and a Finance subcommittee. The council achieved a successful external audit for 2024; budget setting for 2025/26 is already well under way and will be finalised in January 2026.

The finance session offered to councillors as part of the Induction programme following the May 2025 election was particularly well received.

4. Final thoughts and next steps

The LGA would like to thank CTC for undertaking an LGA CPC Progress Review.

We appreciate that senior managerial and political leadership will want to reflect on these findings and suggestions in order to determine how the organisation wishes to take things forward.

Under the umbrella of LGA sector-led improvement, there is an on-going offer of support to councils. The LGA is well placed to provide additional support, advice and guidance on a number of the areas identified for development and improvement and we would be happy to discuss this.

Paul Clarke (Principal Adviser) is the main point of contact between the authority and the LGA and their e-mail address is paul.clarke@local.gov.uk.

