

TAMWORTH BOROUGH COUNCIL

# CORPORATE PEER CHALLENGE ACTION PLAN 2025



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## FORWARD

In October 2024, over a three-day period, we had the privilege of inviting the Local Government Association (LGA) to undertake a thorough review of our performance through a process known as a 'peer challenge.' Led by Rebecca Huddleston, Chief Executive of Wyre Council, Councillor Alan Rhodes, Cabinet Member for Corporate and Financial Services at Bassetlaw District Council, and Councillor Nick Worth, Leader of South Holland District Council, alongside four other experienced local government professionals, this challenge provided us with invaluable external insights.

Peer challenges are an established and voluntary tool used by local councils to drive improvements and enhance efficiency across key areas such as finance, communications, health and wellbeing, equalities, housing, planning, and beyond. While not mandatory, this process presents a unique opportunity to receive constructive feedback from colleagues in local government. Our LGA peer challenge was both timely and welcomed, offering us a critical opportunity to gain an objective assessment of our progress and to help guide our future direction.

We invited the peer challenge team to scrutinise our intentions, approaches, ambitions, and plans for delivery. While we acknowledge the significant challenges facing Tamworth, we also recognise the exciting potential for growth and transformation. We view this peer challenge not only as an external evaluation but as an essential tool for refining our approach and strengthening our resolve. The feedback received is instrumental in shaping the next phase of our journey, making sure we continue to evolve as a council that delivers more for the people of Tamworth.

During their visit, the peer challenge team was struck by the immense pride held by our staff, members, residents, and stakeholders, particularly in relation to Tamworth's rich history and unique heritage. This sense of pride forms the foundation of our ambitions, as we seek to build on our past while focusing on key priorities for the future. These include driving forward digital transformation, fostering innovation, enhancing visibility, advancing equalities, promoting community wellbeing and cohesion, and delivering excellent services. We are also committed to continuing the major regeneration projects that are reshaping our town centre.



While we face considerable financial challenges in the months ahead, the peer challenge has helped us to better align our limited resources with the areas that will underpin our long-term financial resilience and responsibility. In response, we will review our organisational structures and governance frameworks to make sure they are fit for purpose, transparent, and provide confidence in our plans. Strengthening our communication and consultation strategies will also be a priority, making sure we effectively engage with our stakeholders.

The peer challenge team has made several thoughtful suggestions for improvement. This action plan has been developed in direct response to these recommendations, to address the key points raised and continue to build a stronger, more effective council for the future.



**Councillor  
Carol Dean,**  
Leader of  
the Council



**Stephen  
Gabriel,**  
Chief Executive



# INTRODUCTION

The council would like to express its sincere gratitude to the peer challenge team and the Local Government Association (LGA) for their time, insights, and thoughtful recommendations. We fully recognise and agree with the feedback provided.

Like many councils, Tamworth is currently navigating a particularly challenging budget-setting process, which demands considerable time and capacity from senior staff across all areas. In this context, the council must balance finite resources across competing pressures and priorities, making sure we address immediate challenges while continuing to deliver for our residents. As a result, some recommendations may not be implemented immediately and will be actioned once we move past this critical period of financial and strategic planning.

However, this delay should not be interpreted as a lack of importance placed on the corporate peer challenge process or its recommendations. In fact, we are already taking steps on several of the suggestions put forward, as outlined in this action plan. The timing of certain actions reflects the current limitations on our capacity, given the intense financial pressures we are facing.

The council is committed to making sure that any actions taken result in lasting, positive change for both the organisation and the borough. We are eager to work collaboratively with staff, councillors, partners and the community to bring these recommendations to life and make meaningful progress toward our shared goals.

## Delivering the plan

Our work on action planning began as soon as the peer team delivered their recommendations. The outline recommendations from the corporate peer challenge can be described under three broad themes. We are using these as workstreams for action planning and reporting:



Many of the recommendations relate to work already underway. The council is taking a streamlined and pragmatic approach to delivering and monitoring this action plan, utilising existing teams and governance wherever possible.

Where existing work programmes are in place, leads have been asked to review plans utilising the peer challenge feedback. They will outline the changes to be made and accelerate specific outcomes which relate to the recommendations.

Programme governance will be established in line with best practice. Reporting on the specific peer challenge action plan will be to the council's corporate management team and the executive leadership group. By September 2025, the Local Government Association will organise a progress review visit. This will create space for the council to explore progress and challenges with peers and discuss next steps.

## Measures of success

- Medium-Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) complete and aligned with the corporate plan
- Updated Housing Revenue Account business plan
- Establish and initiate the transformation plan for next two-three years
- Publish and adopt the asset management strategy with fully costed asset management plans
- Updated long-term capital strategy
- Equality, diversity and inclusion strategy in place with clear monitoring measures in place
- Social housing improvement programme complete and communicated

- Develop a council wide communications and engagement strategy
- Develop a town centre regeneration strategy
- Develop a community cohesion strategy with associated action plan
- Update the people and organisational development strategy
- Succession planning policy in place
- SMART working review complete
- Updated constitution
- Updated terms of reference for overview and scrutiny committees
- Updated member training offer with actions to increase attendance
- Updated ICT strategy and core project/programme methodologies to support

**To see our updated progress you can link to our annual delivery plan which details the corporate peer challenge actions.**



# RECOMMENDATION

## FINANCIAL RESILIENCE

- 1 Develop a clear plan to address your financial challenges incorporating tangible, costed and deliverable savings with robust governance oversight.
- 2 Align your financial plans to your emerging new corporate plan.
- 3 Ensure you are fully meeting obligations, managing risk, and exercising control over the asset base and investments.

## ENGAGEMENT AND SERVICE DELIVERY

- 4 Ensure the new equality, diversity and inclusion strategy is used to bring to life a common vision and a sense of belonging for all communities, staff and councillors.
- 5 Continue to deliver the social housing improvement programme, working with residents and the Regulator for Social Housing.
- 6 Review communication and consultation approaches.
- 7 Develop your overarching town centre master plan and use this as an opportunity to strengthen communication approaches in relation to town centre regeneration.
- 8 Use the 'honest conversations project to build asset-based approaches to your work in communities and inform your community cohesion plan.

## ORGANISATIONAL CAPACITY AND GOVERNANCE

- 9 Ensure your organisational structure aligns to your priorities and ambitions.
- 10 Strengthen the culture of assurance and good governance across the council, including how statutory officer functions work and are distributed across the authority.
- 11 Review the council's overview and scrutiny structures in support of your corporate priorities.
- 12 Develop a comprehensive plan to achieve digital transformation, putting customers at the heart.

