



NORWICH City Council

Committee Name: Cabinet

Committee Date: 06/07/2022

Report Title: Taking forward an LGA Corporate Peer Challenge of the City Council

Portfolio: Councillor Waters, Leader of the council

Report from: Chief executive

Wards: All wards

OPEN PUBLIC ITEM

Purpose

This report sets out plans to commission the Local Government Association to conduct a Corporate Peer Challenge of Norwich City Council, in order for the council to learn from sector best practice; provide an independent assessment of progress made against its improvement journey to date; and help to identify future areas for improvement.

Recommendation:

That Cabinet agrees to take forward an LGA Corporate Peer Challenge of the council along the lines set out in this report, with the final scope of the review delegated to the Chief Executive for agreement in consultation with the Leader of the Council.

Policy Framework

The Council has five corporate priorities, which are:

- People live independently and well in a diverse and safe city.
- Norwich is a sustainable and healthy city.
- Norwich has the infrastructure and housing it needs to be a successful city.
- The city has an inclusive economy in which residents have equal opportunity to flourish.
- Norwich City Council is in good shape to serve the city.

This report contributes to the 'Norwich City Council is in good shape to serve the city' corporate priority.

Report Details

1. Norwich City Council's Corporate Plan sets out a vision for the council to be an 'outward facing, learning organisation'. This will be achieved in large part by seeking to learn from other successful local authorities and parts of the public sector; being open to independent assessment and challenge; and actively engaging with external partners to identify areas of best practice.
2. A cornerstone of the Local Government Association's (LGA) offer to member authorities is peer challenge support. The peer challenge approach involves a team of experienced officers and members spending time with another council as 'peers' to provide challenge and share learning. Participating councils receive a comprehensive report and recommendations from the peer team and then identify their own action plan in response.
3. Peer challenges are an established tool which support councils to drive improvements and efficiency in specific service areas as well as at a corporate level. The City Council has been embracing the importance and benefits of peer learning in recent years, with recent examples including a peer challenge of regulatory services led by Oxford City Council.
4. Senior Officers are also actively involved in cross-sector learning through various forums including the LGA; Solace (Society of Local Authority Chief Executives); CIPFA; and other professional bodies.

An LGA Corporate Peer Challenge for Norwich

5. A core element of the LGA's support is the Corporate Peer Challenge (CPC) which is an integral element in the peer challenge offer. A CPC involves peer teams spending significant time within councils to identify and address issues and challenge progress across a range of core themes.
6. There are 5 standard core themes of a CPC. CPCs can also be tailored to meet any local needs or specific challenges requested by the council being reviewed. The core themes are:
 1. Local priorities and outcomes
 2. Organisational and place leadership
 3. Governance and culture
 4. Financial planning and management
 5. Capacity for improvement
7. Further details of the 5 themes and what a CPC involves are set out in the standard LGA guidance document at **Appendix A** of this report.
8. The LGA's expectation is that all councils will complete a CPC at least every five years. The last LGA CPC for Norwich City Council was carried out in March 2012.

9. The LGA's CPC offer is effective and well regarded by the sector. A recent survey found that every council that had received a CPC was very or fairly satisfied, with more than eight in ten councils being very satisfied.
10. By bringing together political and managerial leadership - through the use of member and officer peers - a peer challenge provides robust, strategic and credible challenge and support to councils and is an important part of any organisation's future development.
11. There is an expectation that all councils having a CPC will commit to publishing the feedback report and its action plan in response. Six months after the CPC, the LGA will organise a progress review meeting. This will be a facilitated session which creates space for the council's senior leadership to explore progress and challenges with peers and discuss next steps.
12. A peer review team is typically made up of 5 or 6 peer reviewers, encompassing experienced senior officers from across the local government sector and a political peer. The team is led by an elected Leader from another council (usually of the same political party as the administration of the council being reviewed) and a council Chief Executive. Peer Review teams also typically include a Section 151 officer and chief officers with experience of delivering change and transformation programmes.
13. The make-up of the Peer Review team for Norwich will be discussed with the LGA and determined by the Chief Executive, in consultation with the Leader of the Council. In terms of the political lead and lead CEO, Norwich will want to ensure that those leading the review have experience of working in a city or an urban environment with similar challenges.
14. The CEO of the council is in discussion with the LGA to define the scope for the CPC for Norwich – this will broadly follow the priority themes set out in paragraph 5 above and the guidance document at Appendix A. If Cabinet are content to proceed, it is recommended that the final agreement of the review scope be delegated to the CEO in consultation with the Leader.
15. The precise timing of the Norwich CPC will be determined through discussions with the LGA. It is envisaged that the CPC will take place in either late 2022 or early 2023. A CPC usually takes 4 days, with the peer team 'on site' for most of that period. Emerging feedback is provided on a daily basis, with initial recommendations fed back to the council 'on site' at the end of the review period.
16. A final report is then produced with areas of strength identified and recommendations on areas for further development. The City Council would commit to publishing the CPC final report and developing an action plan in response to the recommendations of the peer challenge.

Consultation

17. The Leader of the Council – as portfolio lead for corporate strategy, performance and policy – has been consulted in the development of this proposal.

18. A CPC involves extensive consultation with internal stakeholders and with local and regional strategic partners. The final list of stakeholders to be consulted with as part of the review will be agreed with the CEO but is likely to include:

- The Leader of the Council
- Cabinet Members
- The Leaders of the two opposition parties
- A group of 'back bench' Cllrs (cross-party)
- Officers from the Corporate Leadership Team and Senior Leadership Team
- Other groups of staff including middle managers and frontline services
- Local strategic partners drawn from the Norwich 2040 City Vision Group

19. Key documents are also shared with the peer challenge team in advance of the review, including corporate strategies, action plans and briefing documents which are relevant to the scope.

Implications

Financial and Resources

Any decision to reduce or increase resources or alternatively increase income must be made within the context of the council's stated priorities, as set out in its Corporate Plan and Budget.

20. As a member of the LGA, undertaking a CPC does not come at an additional cost to the council. The only costs that would need to be covered – beyond officer time - are refreshments and subsistence while the peer team are on site.

Legal

21. There are no specific legal considerations albeit it assists the Council in fulfilling its best value duty under the Local Government Act 1999. Whilst conducting a CPC is encouraged by the LGA and considered best practice across the local government sector, it is not a statutory requirement.

Statutory Considerations

Consideration	Details of any implications and proposed measures to address:
Equality and Diversity	None
Health, Social and Economic Impact	None
Crime and Disorder	None
Children and Adults Safeguarding	None
Environmental Impact	None

Risk Management

Risk	Consequence	Controls Required
The work required to prepare for, deliver and respond to a CPC can be significant.	If resources required to support and respond to the review are not in place, it may be a missed opportunity.	Following Cabinet decision, the CEO will put in place a team to develop and support the CPC with enough lead-in time to ensure that the process is manageable.

Other Options Considered

22. There is no requirement for Norwich City Council to conduct a CPC, therefore an alternative would be to not conduct one.

Reasons for the decision/recommendation

23. It is the view of the CEO and the Leader of the Council that we should use a CPC as an opportunity to measure the council's progress and seek the support of the wider sector as part of the Corporate Plan vision to become an outwards looking, learning organisation which learns from best practice elsewhere.

Contact Officer: Stephen Evans, CEO

Email address: stephenevans@norwich.gov.uk

Background papers: None

Appendices: LGA guidance document – Appendix A

LGA Corporate Peer Challenge

Name of council

Scoping Meeting – TBC


Corporate Peer Challenge – TBC

Six Month Check In – TBC

Preparation guidance and templates
for councils

www.local.gov.uk/peer-challenge





1. Introduction	3
2. The Local Government Association Corporate Peer Challenge.....	3
3. The Corporate Peer Challenge process.....	4
4. Background and focus to the LGA Corporate Peer Challenge of [Norwich City Council].....	7
5. Corporate Peer Challenge team	8
6. Information and Data Pack.....	9
7. Evaluation and Impact Survey	11
8. Confidentiality and Freedom of Information	11
Appendix 1: Corporate Peer Challenge Timetable – sample.....	12
Appendix 2: Logistical Arrangements	16
Appendix 3: Suggested format for the Position Statement	18

1. Introduction

This guidance note provides an outline of the Corporate Peer Challenge process. It covers:

- The Local Government Association's Corporate Peer Challenge offer
- The Corporate Peer Challenge process
- Background and focus of the Corporate Peer Challenge
- Corporate Peer Challenge team
- Information and Data Pack
- Evaluation and Impact
- Confidentiality and Freedom of Information

Appendix 1 - Corporate Peer Challenge timetable and suggested interviewees

Appendix 2 – Logistical Arrangements

Appendix 3 - Suggested format for the Position Statement

This note is not intended to be prescriptive but offers advice to get the most from the LGA CPC process. The exact approach will be further discussed and agreed with you.

2. The Local Government Association Corporate Peer Challenge

Since March 2020, the LGA's work has primarily focused on supporting local government and communities to address Covid-19 and its consequences. The LGA developed a refocused support offer to facilitate this.

The challenges faced by councils in the light of Covid-19 pandemic are unprecedented. It is recognised that the impact of the pandemic has been considerable and recovery planning is an iterative process taking place in the context of significant uncertainty. The CPC offer takes into account the challenging context in which councils are operating. It provides independent and external improvement

support and challenge to not only assist councils thinking about recovery but to also support those councils who wish to use this period to reimagine as well as rebuild.

CPC is a tried and trusted method of improvement, it provides councils with a robust and effective improvement tool which is owned and delivered by the sector, for the sector. Peers remain at the heart of the peer challenge process and provide a 'practitioner perspective' and 'critical friend' challenge.

All councils will have a CPC every 5 years which will be delivered at no cost to the council. It will cover the 5 core elements of a CPC (detailed below) as well as any local needs or specific challenges requested by the council.

1. **Local priorities and outcomes**
2. **Organisational and place leadership**
3. **Governance and culture**
4. **Financial planning and management**
5. **Capacity for improvement**

3. The Corporate Peer Challenge process

The CPC process has been improved taking on board the recent [Independent Evaluation of Sector-Led Improvement](#) and the learning from the delivery of Remote Peer Support during the Covid-19 pandemic.

The approach takes the best from the remote working experienced by all councils but understands the value of face-to-face engagement where council members and officers, partners and citizens can talk freely and openly with trusted peers.

The approach is not prescriptive and can be adapted to reflect the local needs of councils. It will typically include the following stages:

Scoping meeting, preparation and engagement, onsite Corporate Peer Challenge, report and action plan, six-month check-in.



Scoping – Agreeing the terms of reference

A scoping meeting with the relevant LGA Principal Adviser Rachel Litherland and where possible the LGA Peer Challenge Manager Kirsty Human will be held approximately 6 months prior to the CPC.

The scoping meeting will typically include the Chief Executive and Leader as well as other relevant officers and members. It is an opportunity to engage key officers and members from the outset and consider the CPC approach, discuss priorities and challenges, and agree the local focus for the peer challenge.

At the scoping meeting initial proposals for the peer team will be discussed. The LGA will source and agree a team of officer and member peers informed by the skills and experience required. The LGA is committed to diversity and inclusion to ensure that peer teams reflect the diversity of local councils and the communities they serve. There is also the opportunity to include peers from outside of local government, such as team member(s) with community sector, central government or private sector experience. These peers will be discussed and agreed with you.

Following these discussions, the council will be provided with a scoping document that sets out the agreed scope of the CPC, including the local areas of focus.

Preparation and Engagement

It is important that the peer team have an in-depth understanding of the local issues before their onsite activity. This will primarily be provided through an Information & Data Pack, which includes background documentation provided by the council and LGA. (See section 5).

Once the peer team have received the Information & Data Pack, a short programme of remote engagement will be undertaken before the onsite activity. This will include

introductory conversations between some of the peers (typically the chief executive and leader) and their respective counterparts at the council as well as a full peer team remote meeting.

In addition, learning indicates that opportunities for the peer team to observe normal business meetings (e.g. cabinet/committee or senior management meetings) can enable peers to better understand the council and provide valued insights as part of the peer challenge process. For example, the peer team may seek to observe member meetings remotely prior to the onsite activity.

The LGA may also seek to undertake some pre-CPC engagement with citizens, staff groups and/or stakeholders, such as web-based surveys. Any preparatory work or engagement will be agreed with you in advance.

Onsite Corporate Peer Challenge

It is proposed that the LGA Peer Team spend time remotely and on site at the council meeting members, staff, partners and citizens. The council will need to arrange a timetable of activity organised for the peer team in advance. Appendix 1 provides an example. Where face to face sessions are not possible, remote meetings will be arranged.

Meetings should provide an opportunity for discussion which explores issues and ideas as much as evidence gathering. The peer team will split into pairs to facilitate the meetings/discussion sessions so there can be two or three streams of activity running at the same time. We suggest that consideration be given to some of the meetings being undertaken as workshop/focus group activities rather than only one-to-one discussions.

Feedback, Report and Action Plan

On the final day the peer team will deliver verbal feedback to a selected audience which should include as a minimum the corporate leadership team, cabinet members and opposition members as appropriate. During this feedback there is opportunity for clarification and questions.

This will be followed by a report detailing the strengths of the council, the issues considered, areas for further improvement and key recommendations. The council

will receive the draft report within 3 weeks of the CPC. We welcome comments on the report within a two week timescale and we will agree the final report with you for publication. The council should then develop a detailed action plan that responds to the report's findings.

The CPC report should be published on the council's website within six weeks of finalization. The LGA will also publish the report via its website. It is expected that the council's action plan will be published within eight weeks of the CPC report's publication.

Six Month Progress Review

Six months after the CPC, the LGA will organise a progress review meeting. This will be a short-facilitated session which creates space for the council's senior leadership to update peers on its progress against the action plan and discuss next steps. The LGA will produce a short note which reflects the council's progress, provides examples of good practice and highlights the initial impact and outcomes. As part of ensuring an open and transparent process, there is an expectation that this note will be published.

4. Background and focus to the LGA Corporate Peer Challenge of [Name of council]

The peer team will explore the core components (underpinning features of good performance) that all LGA CPCs cover:

1. **Local priorities and outcomes:** Are the council's priorities clear and informed by the local context? Is the council delivering effectively on its priorities and achieving improved outcomes for all its communities?
2. **Organisational and place leadership:** Does the council provide effective local leadership? Are there good relationships with partner organisations and local communities?
3. **Governance and culture:** Are there clear and robust governance arrangements? Is there a culture of respect, challenge and scrutiny?

4. **Financial planning and management:** Does the council have a clear understanding of its current financial position? Does the council have a strategy and a clear plan to address its financial challenges?
5. **Capacity for improvement:** Is the organisation able to support delivery of local priorities? Does the council have the capacity to improve?

In addition to the core elements Norwich City Council may wish to identify an additional focus area. This might include, for example, a particular priority issue or challenge, such as economic development, housing delivery or working with communities.

Whatever the focus it is important the peer team have a clear term of reference and a manageable focus - your LGA Principal Adviser will discuss and agree this with you.

5. Corporate Peer Challenge team

The Peer Challenge Manager will lead the development of the CPC and will source the peer team which will include a chief executive peer and a political peer (e.g. a council leader and/or senior councillor.)

In addition, the team will include further peers such as additional senior officers, members or specialist peers to reflect the focus of the CPC process. The LGA is committed to ensuring that peer teams reflect the diversity of local communities.

Norwich City Council CPC Peer Team (add in names and titles when available)

- Chief Executive
- Member Peer(s)
- Officer Peer
- Officer Peer
- LGA Peer Challenge Manager
- LGA Project Support Officer

The peer team will require a room at the council to use as a base for the time they

are on site, which should be in the main headquarters of the council.

Appendix 2 provides details of the logistical arrangements required.

6. Information and Data Pack

The LGA's Principal Adviser will discuss with you the Information and Data Pack that will support the CPC's work informed by the agreed scope and focus.

A key background document for the peer team will be a 'Position Statement' prepared by the council. This provides a clear brief and steer to the peer team on the local context and what the peer team should focus on. It is an opportunity to set out the key issues, challenges and current thinking in relation to the CPC.

The position statement should be structured around the five core components of:

- Local priorities and outcomes
- Organisational and place leadership
- Governance and culture
- Financial planning and management
- Capacity for improvement

Appendix 3 provides some of the areas that should be covered in the document.

These are a guide rather than an exhaustive or prescriptive list.

The Position Statement is an opportunity to undertake an honest self-assessment and provide the peer team with a summary of the most pertinent issues and challenges. The peer challenge process works best if peers are clear at the outset of the areas where the council would most welcome and benefit from their observations. You may wish to include some specific questions within the document for peers to consider. All peers are given strict guidelines regarding confidentiality and data protection and the Position Statement will be used for the sole purpose of informing the peer challenge.

We are also keen to learn about examples of successful practice that the council would be happy for us to share with the sector. There is an opportunity in the Position

Statement to identify examples and provide a short summary that can be shared with others

In addition to the Position Statement we suggest a small suite of background documentation is provided to the peer challenge team, comprising of documents that will support and inform the peer team's consideration of both the core components and any local areas of focus. This might include

- Corporate Plan
- Medium Term Financial Strategy
- Annual Governance Statement
- EDI Strategy and Objectives
- Organisation structure chart (senior management structure)
- Organisational improvement plan / Transformation programme
- Diagram of democratic decision-making arrangements
- Latest annual audit letter
- Staff survey results (if applicable)
- Resident satisfaction survey results (if applicable)
- Key performance data/reports
- Relevant council policies

We will, of course, discuss further information that will be useful to share with the peer team. But it is anticipated that most of the information required should already be in circulation.

Background information should be ready to be circulated to the peer team approximately 3 weeks before the CPC commences. The peer team may require further information when onsite, so please be prepared to respond to requests.

In addition, the LGA will provide some supporting information, that will be agreed and shared with you in advance, to inform the CPC's work. This will include a financial briefing prepared by the LGA and a summary performance report based on public data available on LG Inform.

7. Evaluation and Impact Survey

The LGA is constantly looking to improve the peer challenge process and evaluate its impact. In undertaking a CPC, we ask that you complete a short online survey just after the challenge. We ask that both Chief Executive and Leader complete the survey and all responses are treated confidentially.

8. Confidentiality and Freedom of Information

It is vital for the CPC process to be underpinned by trust and take place in an environment in which people feel they can be open and honest. LGA peers are encouraged to return to their own organisations at the end of the process and talk about their experiences. But in doing so, they are asked to respect that some of the information considered by the CPC may be sensitive in nature and it is important that it is not used in any way that may undermine the council or integrity of the CPC process.

The LGA is required to comply with the obligations under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 and the Environmental Information Regulations 2004.

If the LGA receive a request it will inform you and allow you to comment on what we are intending to release if you are referred to as a 3rd party. Please note that the final decision as to what will be released resides with the LGA.

Appendix 1: Corporate Peer Challenge Timetable – sample

As a general rule, one-to-one discussions should be scheduled for 1 hour and focus groups for 1.5 hours.

Day 1

Time	Work stream 1	Work stream 2
1pm – 2.30pm	Peer Challenge Team arrive at the council Working lunch Welcome and cover ‘housekeeping’ and issue security passes. Team set up base room and prepare.	
2.30 pm – 3.30pm	Scene setting session and initial dialogue with chief executive and leader – checking expectations and sharing initial perceptions	
3.30 pm – 4.30 pm	Chief Executive (Chief Exec’s Office)	Leader of the Council (Leader’s office)
4.30 pm - 5.30pm		

Day2

Time	Work stream 1	Work stream 2
8.30am – 9.30am	Peer Team Time	
9.30am –10.30am		
10.30 am – 11.30am		
11.30 am –		

12.30pm		
12.30pm – 2.00pm	Peer Team Working Lunch	
2.00pm – 3.00pm		
3.00pm – 4.00pm		
4.00pm – 5.00pm		
5.00pm – 6.00pm		
6.00pm – 7.30pm		O&S Meeting

Day 3

<i>Time</i>	<i>Work stream 1</i>	<i>Work stream 2</i>
8.30am – 9.30am	Peer Team Time	
9.30am – 10.30am		
10.30 am – 11.30am		
11.30 am – 2.30pm		
12.30pm – 2.00pm	Peer Team Working Lunch	
2.00pm – 3.00pm		
3.00pm – 4.00pm		
4.00pm – 5.00pm		
5.00pm – 6.00pm	No Meetings – Peer Team Time	
6.00pm – 7.30pm	Cabinet Meeting	



Day 4

<i>Time</i>	<i>Work stream 1</i>	<i>Work stream 2</i>
8.30am – 12.30pm	Peer Team Feedback Preparation	
12.30pm – 1.00pm	Catch up with Leader and Chief Executive	
1.00pm – 2.00pm	Peer Team Feedback Preparation	
2.00pm – 3.30pm	Formal Feedback Session	

Interview suggestions

Some suggestions (neither a prescriptive nor an exhaustive list) of who the peer team will need to meet with are:

- Leader of the Council
- Cabinet portfolio holder for Finance
- Political Group Leaders
- Chair(s) of Overview and Scrutiny
- Chief Executive
- Chief Officers/Directors
- Director/Head of finance (S151 Officer)
- Monitoring Officer
- Director/Head of Policy/Performance
- Head of Internal Audit
- External Auditor
- Head of HR
- Head of Democratic Services
- Lead officer for change/transformation
- Focus group of staff
- Focus group with Cabinet members
- Focus group with strategic/senior management team
- Focus group with heads of service
- Focus group with non-executive/frontline members
- Citizens
- Key partners – perhaps a mixture of meetings with key individuals and focus groups (possibly themed) – including business, public and voluntary sectors
- Combined Authority partners
- Local authorities such as town or parish councils
- Trade union representatives

Appendix 2 - Logistical Arrangements

Due to the pandemic the logistical arrangements for delivering a face to face peer challenge have changed considerably. The LGA requests a copy of the council's Covid secure guidance, risk assessment and mitigation plans.

The LGA recognises the importance of sustainability and climate action, including the need to deliver zero net carbon by 2030. In planning and delivering the peer challenge, the LGA will seek to model best practice in how it conducts its own business. The LGA will aim to reduce its carbon footprint by using public transport where possible, reducing waste such as keeping printing to a minimum, conducting meetings online instead of in-person where suitable, and selecting sustainable providers, such as hotels that are working to reduce their carbon footprint. We seek the support of [name of council] in achieving this.

Base Room

The LGA Peer Team will require a base room which will be for the sole use of the peer team members. Ideally it needs be private and lockable. Meetings, workshops and focus groups will be held in other rooms.

The base room will need to be big enough to accommodate all the peers with good ventilation. The peer team will require:

- Hand sanitizer in the base room
- Adequate desk space for each person to work on during the week that adheres to social distancing guidance

Lunch that is not buffet style for peers.

As the peer teams may work in the evenings, access to the team base room outside of normal office hours might be needed as will relevant security passes, one per peer.

Meetings and meeting rooms


Meetings should be held in well-ventilated rooms with adequate social distancing. We ask that you provide hand sanitiser in all meetings rooms.

Catering

It is important that catering arrangements are planned in conjunction with the timetable and in consultation with the LGA Peer Challenge Manager who will advise of any specific dietary or cultural requirements the peer team have.

Car Parking

We encourage peers to use public transport, however, members of the LGA Peer Team



may require car parking – we will discuss this with you as required.

Hotel Booking

The LGA will book a hotel for the peer team and would welcome suggestions from the council. We are keen to use hotels that have strong sustainability and climate change credentials.

Appendix 3 – suggested format for the Position Statement

The following is not intended to be prescriptive but provides guidance in terms of a structure/format for the Position Statement, and the areas that might be covered by each section of the document.

Section	Suggested content
Introduction	Why the council is commissioning a Corporate Peer Challenge Basic contextual information on the place and organisation
Local priorities and outcomes	The council's vision and priorities and the outcomes sought by them How communities and stakeholders shape priorities and delivery How equality and diversity considerations inform the council's prioritisation and delivery arrangements How the council manages performance and local performance information
Organisational and place leadership	The arrangements and support for organisational leadership How the council leads the local area and works with local and regional partners Shared placed ambitions, collective leadership capacity and the future focus of joint working How is the council is communicating its challenges, future ambitions and organisational changes

Section	Suggested content
Governance and culture	<p>The council's governance arrangements (e.g. constitution, decision making processes)</p> <p>The arrangements that facilitate and support</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Good member-officer relationships including respective roles and responsibilities • Timely decisions and scrutiny • A culture of respect, transparency and challenge <p>Strategic risk management arrangements</p> <p>Staff engagement mechanisms and internal communications</p>
Financial planning and management	<p>Current financial 'health' of the council (e.g. levels of reserves, savings/efficiencies achieved to date, external audit opinion)</p> <p>The key facets of the MTFS (e.g. commercialisation, new delivery models, demand management, etc.)</p> <p>The key financial risks facing the council and the plans to manage those</p> <p>In-year budget monitoring / financial management process including approach to underspends and overspends</p> <p>Capital programme / investment plans that support the delivery of council priorities and the financial sustainability of the council</p> <p>Financial decision making, including the internal governance arrangements and public engagement approach</p>

Section	Suggested content
<p>Capacity for improvement</p>	<p>How the council adapts, learns and improves – arrangements and approaches</p> <p>The learning from Covid-19 for the organisation’s future capabilities and practice</p> <p>The council’s approach in key capacity areas, such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Organisation development – including workforce • Digital and data – including for performance improvement • Programme management and transformation • Equality and diversity – including identify and addressing inequalities • Climate change and ecological emergencies <p>Key plans and data, such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Performance management framework • Key programmes and projects • Workforce information e.g. sickness absence and staff survey results <p>Community capacity – how the council listens, empowers and co-designs with residents and communities, including the voluntary sector</p>
<p>Sharing of successful practice</p>	<p>Up to 2 examples of practice that the council thinks will be of help to the sector using the LGA’s case study template which can be downloaded as a MS Word document from the LGA case studies web page.</p>