Tamworth
Borough Council

Local Government Association's
Corporate Peer Challenge

POSITION
STATEMENT

August 2025
www.tamworth.gov.uk

Contents

Our LGA Corporate Peer Challenge Review

"Building a Better Tamworth."

Our vision reflects our commitment to creating a thriving, inclusive, and sustainable community.

This is supported by four key priorities: boosting prosperity and place, protecting the environment, enhancing community wellbeing, and ensuring we operate as a compassionate, accessible, and financially resilient organisation.

Context

The Corporate Peer Challenge undertaken in October 2024 provided significant value to the organisation. We appreciated the opportunity to engage collaboratively with representatives from the Local Government Association (LGA), our partners, elected members, and colleagues. This challenge supported our commitment to transparency, accountability, and continuous improvement across the council.

Twelve recommendations were put forward by the Peer Team, including:

Recommendation
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.
4) Ensure the new Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) 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 of Social Housing.
6) Review, develop and strengthen communication and consultation approaches.
7) Develop your overarching Town Centre Regeneration Strategy 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.

9)	Review your organisational structure and future ways of working, ensuring this aligns to/enables delivery of your priorities and ambitions.
10)	Continue to 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.

The council formally accepted the findings and recommendations of the Peer Team, which informed the development of an Action Plan subsequently approved by Cabinet in January 2025. Oversight and monitoring of the Action Plan's implementation have been led by the Corporate Management Team (CMT), with ongoing support from the Policy and Performance Team.

Tamworth Borough Council is currently operating within a dynamic policy environment shaped by the government's proposals for Devolution and Local Government Reorganisation (LGR). These reforms, outlined in the December 2024 English Devolution White Paper, aim to simplify the existing two-tier system by establishing larger unitary authorities with devolved powers. The implications for Tamworth are significant, with potential changes to governance structures, service delivery models, and community representation.

While the council has remained focused on progressing the recommendations and findings from the Corporate Peer Challenge, the evolving demands of LGR have required prioritisation of related activities. As a result, some actions may not have advanced as swiftly as originally intended. Nonetheless, the council continues to engage actively with partners across Staffordshire to shape a coordinated response that reflects local priorities and safeguards service continuity.

As a council, we are adopting a structured and forward-looking approach to LGR, with a clear emphasis on governance reform, preserving community identity, and ensuring strategic readiness for transition. As part of this preparation, the council is actively considering a Community Governance Review (CGR) to assess and potentially reshape local representation arrangements. This includes exploring emerging models such as neighbourhood area committees, which may offer more flexible and locally responsive governance structures.

For further detail, please refer to *Appendix 1 – Local Government Reorganisation in Southern and Mid Staffordshire – Interim Plan (March 2025)*.

About This Document

This Position Statement provides the Peer Team with a comprehensive update on progress made against each of the twelve recommendations and its associated actions. It outlines the key issues, achievements, challenges, and current perspectives relating to the ongoing monitoring and impact evaluation of these recommendations.

This document is written as such that each recommendation is presented in a dedicated section. Within each section, the following elements are included:

- **Progress Update:** A summary of current activity and developments.
- **Local Government Reorganisation Considerations:** An assessment of how structural changes may influence delivery or implementation.
- **Impact Evaluation:** An analysis of the anticipated or observed effects of the recommendation.
- **Appendices:** Supporting documents providing additional context and reference material.

Each recommendation is assigned a status, categorised as either on track, at risk, or off track. The table below outlines the criteria used to determine these status indicators.

Status	Explanation
On Track	The activity associated with this recommendation is classified as 'On Track'. - All milestones are progressing as planned, with no delays.
At Risk	The activity associated with this recommendation is classified as 'At Risk'. - One milestone is overdue, or up to two milestones are due in the next reporting month but there is no milestone note to confirm work has started.
Off Track	The activity associated with this recommendation is classified as 'Off Track'. - Two or more milestones are overdue, or one milestone is delayed by two months or more.

For more information, including a detailed breakdown of each recommendation by status, please refer to the RAG Rated Action Plan.

Recommendation One

Develop a clear plan to address your financial challenges incorporating tangible, costed and deliverable savings with robust governance and oversight.

Status: At Risk

Peer Team Feedback: "The council is currently relying on reserves and balances to meet the gap which is unsustainable in the medium and longer term. The council needs to act now to develop a clear savings plan incorporating tangible, costed and deliverable savings with strong political and managerial leadership and oversight."

Progress Update

- The council has consistently delivered a balanced budget across the three-year Medium-Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) period. However, this has largely been achieved using reserves and balances to offset deficit positions, an approach that is not sustainable in the longer-term. The financial landscape has been further complicated by the short-term nature of recent one-year local government settlements, the pending Fairer Funding Review, and the repeated delays to the Business Rates Reset, which has been anticipated for several years.

- Tamworth has benefited from retained business rates growth, and the postponement of the reset has allowed continued reliance on this funding stream. Nevertheless, it is now confirmed that funding reform will be implemented from 2026/27, with potentially significant implications for the council's financial position. At this stage, it remains unclear whether any transitional relief will be provided.

- In response to these challenges, the council has taken proactive steps through the recent budget process to identify and implement additional income generation and savings measures.

- A Financial Resilience Plan (FRP) was developed and formally approved alongside the 2025/26 Budget and MTFS Report at Full Council in February 2025. The FRP sets out defined savings and income targets, including any associated costs, and has been integrated into the council's performance management framework. Implementation is subject to monthly monitoring by the Corporate Management Team (CMT), with progress reported quarterly to both Corporate Scrutiny and Cabinet.

- Progress towards achieving the budgeted savings and additional income for 2025/26 is being actively monitored through the council's Financial Healthcheck Reporting. This process commenced at the end of Quarter 1 (June 2025) and includes both monthly and quarterly reviews to ensure timely oversight.

- Actions arising from the FRP have been embedded within the relevant directorate service plans. Ongoing oversight and monitoring are in place to ensure that targets remain achievable, and resources are appropriately allocated to support delivery.

- A Vacancy Panel has been established to provide scrutiny and validation of staffing proposals. The panel has actively challenged funding assumptions and recruitment processes, while also offering targeted support to service areas requiring additional resources.

Local Government Reorganisation Considerations

- The Local Government Reorganisation (LGR) is likely to have a significant impact on the delivery of the FRP. The transition to a unitary council is anticipated to generate considerable costs, including those associated with staff time, resource allocation, external consultancy and legal services.
- To support these requirements, an initial allocation of £100,000 has been set aside in reserves for the 2025/26 financial year. Of this, approximately £50,000 is earmarked for engaging external consultants to develop the Southern Staffordshire business case, which is due by November 2025. The government has made limited New Burdens funding available to assist with the preparation of the business case.
- In addition to the increased budgetary pressures, the planning and preparation required for LGR will necessitate a reassessment of the proposed staffing savings outlined in the FRP. This reflects the need to allocate additional resources to both implement this significant transformation programme and maintain continuity in day-to-day service delivery.
- On 12 August 2025, the Appointments and Staffing Committee approved the Senior Management restructure and establishment of a Programme Management Office (PMO) encompassing two officers to oversee and coordinate key strategic projects, including LGR. While this represents an investment with implications for the MTFS, both members and officers recognise that these substantial challenges must be appropriately resourced to ensure effective change management and delivery.
- The current uncertainty presents challenges for long-term planning and decision-making, particularly in relation to capital investment and regeneration initiatives. Additionally, there is a potential risk of short-term pressure to utilise reserves, which could impact financial sustainability.
- Likewise, work has commenced to assess the feasibility of establishing a parish council for the town through a Community Governance Review (CGR). This process will require substantial staffing, consultancy, and legal resources to develop the proposal and undertake public consultation. As part of the review, consideration will need to be given to the potential transfer of assets and services to the parish council, which will inform the associated precept. An Assets Review is currently being completed to help inform this piece of work (see Recommendation 3 for further information).

Impact Evaluation

- The FRP has provided the council with a structured framework for addressing financial challenges, enabling a more strategic and coordinated approach to fiscal management.

- Effective monitoring of savings and income targets is contributing to the maintenance of financial stability. In parallel, the newly established Programme and Delivery Board is actively reviewing essential services to ensure alignment with strategic priorities and resource constraints.
- To support delivery of the FRP, the council has implemented a structured approach to monitoring and accountability:
  - **Service-Level Engagement:** Assistant Directors and Heads of Service are actively updating progress against FRP actions within their respective service plans.
  - **Strategic Oversight:** Regular reporting to CMT ensures continued focus on delivery and reinforces accountability across services.
  - **Financial Monitoring:** Budgeted savings and additional income are tracked and reported to members through the quarterly Financial Healthcheck Reports, which are reviewed by both Scrutiny and Cabinet.
  - **Performance Tracking:** A framework for monitoring progress against FRP actions within service plans is being developed to strengthen transparency and support informed decision-making.

Appendices

Appendix 2 – 2025/26 Budget and MTFS Report (FRP included as an appendix within this document)

Appendix 3 – Quarter 1 Financial Healthcheck Report

Recommendation Two

Align your financial plans to your emerging new corporate plan.

Status: On Track

Peer Team Feedback: "Once agreed, the new Corporate Plan will guide planning and decision making for Tamworth Council over the next five years. It is important that the new Plan is aligned with the council's resources and capacity to deliver."

Progress Update

- The Financial Resilience Plan (FRP) was developed in alignment with the priorities set out in the new Corporate Plan 2025-2030, ensuring a coordinated and strategic approach to addressing financial challenges.
- The development of the FRP was driven by an urgent need to achieve savings and generate additional income, reflecting the feedback received through the Annual Survey conducted during the year.
- The FRP incorporates targeted workstreams aimed at reducing dependency on balances and reserves. By prioritising expenditure, the plan supports the achievement of budgeted savings and/or additional income.
- The FRP, alongside the Corporate Plan 2025-2030, was formally approved as part of the Budget and Medium-Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) Report presented to Full Council in February 2025.
- The new Corporate Plan 2025-2030 has been rolled out across the organisation, accompanied by the implementation of a performance management framework to support delivery and accountability.
- Monthly monitoring and oversight by the Corporate Management Team (CMT), alongside quarterly reporting to Scrutiny and Cabinet will continue throughout the year. As the 2026/27 budget-setting process begins, updates and refinements will be made to ensure ongoing alignment with the council's corporate priorities.
- The budgeting process for 2025/26 to 2029/30 focused on:
  - Identifying savings measures to mitigate the impact of unavoidable cost pressures anticipated in 2025/26.
  - Incorporating the implications of the one-year local government finance settlement.
  - Preparing for potential funding reforms in 2026/27, while progressing towards improved financial sustainability.
- A new inclusive approach to budgeting has been introduced supported by a structured framework involving Portfolio Holders, Executive Directors and CMT through the Budget Fortnight process.

- Investment and resources are being released to help address emerging budget pressures, particularly in response to the financial demands associated with Local Government Reorganisation (LGR).
- Opportunities to invest in service delivery and cost-saving initiatives are actively being identified, supporting both improved outcomes and long-term financial sustainability.

Local Government Reorganisation Considerations

- As a council, we are currently facing significant financial challenges, which require difficult decisions regarding the allocation of resources between statutory responsibilities and other corporate priorities. These pressures are expected to intensify further due to the additional costs associated with LGR.
- Whilst long-term efficiencies are expected, the planning, implementation, and transition phases will incur additional costs. These factors will influence the council's financial planning and may limit its ability to fund all services at the desired levels.

Impact Evaluation

- The alignment of the FRP with the Corporate Plan 2025-2030 will have a significant impact on the council by ensuring that financial planning is closely integrated with strategic priorities. This approach enables effective monitoring and management of savings and income targets, thereby supporting financial stability.

Appendices

Appendix 4 – Tamworth Borough Council Corporate Plan 2025-2030

Recommendation Three

Ensure you are fully meeting obligations, managing risk, and exercising control over the asset base and investments.

Status: On Track

Peer Team Feedback: "The council's property base comprises some important assets with extensive liabilities attached. Progress your work on Asset Management, following the recent refresh of the Asset Management Strategy. Ensure the council is confident that it is able to exercise responsible ownership, manage risk and exercise control over the asset base."

Progress Update

- Following the approval of the Asset Management Strategy in Autumn 2024, the council has made steady progress in strengthening its approach to asset ownership, risk management, and investment control. Detailed Asset Plans are currently being developed under the oversight of the Asset Strategy Steering Group, which meets regularly to guide and review progress.

- High-level plans have already undergone review, with further amendments scheduled for August 2025 to align with the work currently being undertaken by Arcadis. Arcadis has been commissioned to develop a comprehensive Asset Management Plan that assesses asset performance in the context of both current and future market conditions. This work is being carried out in close collaboration with key stakeholders to ensure strategic alignment and informed decision-making.

- Due to limited internal capacity, staff have prioritised this programme over other activities. Its delivery is being supported through the Building Repairs Fund (BRF) and funding from the Taylor Wimpey settlement for Ankerside, as no dedicated budget was initially allocated for this initiative.

- Likewise, the council is actively considering the treatment of assets under Local Government Reorganisation (LGR). Arcadis is currently reviewing the implications of LGR on the council's asset portfolio, including investment properties, heritage and community assets, and operational models. Further detailed option appraisal work is expected to follow upon completion of Arcadis' review, completion of which is scheduled for October 2025.

- This work marks a shift towards a more strategic and evidence-based approach to asset management, positioning the council to make informed decisions that support financial resilience and the sustainable delivery of services over the long-term.

- A key challenge associated with the council's asset base is the historic lack of investment, particularly in commercial and industrial properties, which have largely been viewed as income-generating assets without the corresponding expenditure required to maintain them in good condition. As a result, the condition, scale, and nature of these assets often lead to poor-quality tenant covenants.

- In addition to the underinvestment in the assets themselves, limited resources have been allocated to their management, contributing to frequent non-compliance with tenant obligations. The asset management work currently being undertaken by Arcadis will inform the council's future investment strategy. This may include reinvesting a greater proportion of rental income into retained assets or pursuing strategic disposals, with proceeds redirected to support reinvestment priorities.

Local Government Reorganisation Considerations

- Arcadis is currently reviewing how the council's assets may be addressed as part of the LGR process. This includes evaluating investment assets in terms of their condition, sustainability, future potential, and opportunities, as well as assessing the management and operational models applicable to heritage and community assets.
- Additional detailed option appraisal work is expected to follow the completion of Arcadis' review. This will support the council in determining which assets may be retained, transferred, or restructured under future governance arrangements.
- The council is also exploring how asset-related decisions can be aligned with broader objectives such as financial resilience, continuity of service delivery, and the preservation of local identity within the context of LGR.

Impact Evaluation

- The development of detailed Asset Plans, following the approval of the Asset Management Strategy has strengthened the council's stewardship of its asset base by promoting accountable ownership and effective control.
- The formation of the Asset Strategy Steering Group, alongside the commissioning of Arcadis to develop a comprehensive Asset Management Plan, has facilitated robust evaluation of asset performance and market dynamics.
- To evaluate impact going forward, the council will:
  - Track performance metrics such as asset condition, utilisation, and financial return, with quarterly reporting to the Asset Strategy Steering Group.
  - Use Arcadis' Asset Management Plan as a baseline for independent assessment, with annual reviews to measure progress and inform decision-making.
  - Monitor delivery milestones for the development and implementation of Asset Plans, including amendments scheduled for August 2025.
  - Assess alignment with LGR requirements, ensuring assets are categorised, appraised, and positioned for potential transfer or reallocation.
- This structured approach will ensure that asset management remains strategic, risk-aware, and financially sustainable.

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Recommendation Four

Ensure the new Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) Strategy is used to bring to life a common vision and a sense of belonging for all communities, staff and councillors.

Status: On Track

Peer Team Feedback: "Ensure leadership and organisational commitment to this work to help embed EDI principles across everything the council does including work to strengthen community cohesion."

Progress Update

- An Equality and Diversity (ED) Strategy, along with an impact assessment process, was implemented in January 2025.
- An Equality and Diversity Steering Group has been established to lead the organisation's implementation of the strategy's actions. Chaired by the Executive Director for Organisation, the group has initiated its first quarterly request for progress updates from operational managers, enabling systematic tracking and monitoring. Progress will be reported to both the Steering Group and the Health and Wellbeing Scrutiny Committee.
- The Gender Pay Gap Report confirms, for the first time, that there is no gender pay gap in both the mean and median pay data.
- A Customer Service and Access Strategy is currently in development, with the launch of a customer contact improvement project focused on ensuring accessibility for all users.
- Furthermore, face-to-face reception services resumed in January 2025, ensuring that all residents, including those without access to digital channels or requiring additional support can engage with the council directly. This inclusive approach reinforces the council's commitment to meeting the diverse needs of the community and delivering services in a customer-focused and accessible manner.
- The Council Chamber has undergone refurbishment to improve accessibility and create a more welcoming environment. The upgraded space now ensures that all councillors and Tamworth residents, regardless of mobility or access needs, can fully participate in council meetings.
- Launch of the Tenant Inclusion Action Plan, aimed at strengthening tenant engagement and promoting inclusive service delivery.
- The planning consultation database now records individual's additional needs, enabling the implementation of appropriate reasonable adjustments to support inclusive engagement.

Local Government Reorganisation Considerations

- Initiatives will be aligned with community priorities using data analysis and targeted engagement strategies, ensuring they reflect the lived experiences and needs of diverse populations.

- Equality, Social Inclusion and Health Impact Assessments will be carried out as a standard part of all decision-making processes.
- Communication strategies will be tailored to meet the specific needs and preferences of each community.
- Inclusion will be promoted through regular reviews of HR policies, procurement procedures, and service delivery practices, ensuring an inclusive perspective is embedded throughout.

Impact Evaluation

- To measure the impact of our ED Strategy, we will track progress through a combination of qualitative and quantitative indicators. These include:
  - **Workforce Metrics:** Monitor diversity data, gender pay gap trends, and inclusivity indicators across recruitment, retention, and progression.
  - **Accessibility Feedback:** Use complaints data and customer satisfaction surveys to assess improvements in service accessibility.
  - **Training Outcomes:** Evaluate staff training uptake and impact through pre- and post-training assessments and feedback.
  - **Community Engagement:** Track participation in community events and consultation exercises, with a focus on underrepresented groups.
  - **Decision-Making Integration:** Audit the use of Equality, Social Inclusion and Health Impact Assessments in policy and service decisions.
  - **Governance Oversight:** Report progress quarterly to the Equality and Diversity Steering Group, Corporate Management Team (CMT) and Scrutiny, ensuring accountability and transparency.

Appendices

Appendix 9 – Equality and Diversity Strategy 2025-2028

Appendix 10 – Equality and Diversity Actions Achieved

Appendix 11 – People and OD Strategy 2025-2030

Appendix 12 – People and OD Strategy Action Plan

Recommendation Five

Continue to deliver the Social Housing Improvement Programme working with residents and the Regulator of Social Housing.

Status: Off Track

Peer Team Feedback: "It is positive that the council have been proactive, open and transparent, triggering a self-referral to the Regulator of Social Housing. It is important that you maintain focus and drive on your improvement journey."

Progress Update

- The council has adopted a proactive and transparent approach to improving social housing, demonstrated by its self-referral to the Regulator of Social Housing and the development of a robust Recovery Action Plan.

- The Social Housing Regulatory Programme is a cross-organisational initiative comprising six projects, each aligned with one of the regulatory consumer standards. The programme is designed to enhance tenant satisfaction and provide clear evidence of tenant engagement across housing services.

- While we acknowledge that challenges remain, the programme is now integrated into the council's performance reporting framework. Although it is currently flagged as 'Off Track', it remains under control. Key areas of risk relate to safety and quality standards within the repairs service. These issues are being actively addressed through the improvement plan, with clearly defined actions and accountability measures in place.

- Since the council's self-referral to the Regulator of Social Housing in August 2024, there has been ongoing and constructive engagement with the Regulators. During the most recent meeting on 11 July 2025, the council demonstrated clear progress in embedding a culture of continuous improvement through regular monitoring, tenant engagement, and cross-service collaboration. While formal confirmation is pending, the Regulators indicated their intention to close the self-referral, subject to internal verification, which is awaited at the time of writing.

- As part of the programme, the Housing Advisory Board has adopted refreshed terms of reference to strengthen tenant and leaseholder engagement in service improvement planning. The Board, where tenants have constitutional visibility and voting rights meets bi-monthly and forms a key component of the council's governance framework. It is cross-party in composition, with co-opted partners and representation from both tenants and leaseholders.

- The Housing Advisory Board, together with relevant Scrutiny Committee(s) and Cabinet, receives regular updates on programme progress. The most recent Cabinet update, presented in June 2025, included developments on the Tenant Voice Strategy and Programme Outcomes. The Tenant Voice Strategy is specifically designed to reflect tenant demographics and ensure services are tailored

accordingly. This forms part of the council's broader inclusivity planning, which is now routinely reported to the Board.

- Updated policies on Anti-Social Behaviour and Environmental Crime, Domestic Abuse, and Hate Crime, developed in consultation with tenants will be presented to Cabinet in November 2025.
- A mock inspection is scheduled for October 2025, with the outcomes to be reported to Cabinet in December 2025. The council remains committed to transparency, with self-referral and external assurance continuing to form key elements of our approach.
- This work goes beyond compliance, it is about rebuilding trust, enhancing tenant satisfaction, improving living conditions, and ensuring tenants feel genuinely heard and supported. The council's continued commitment to transparency and accountability will be essential in maintaining momentum and achieving lasting change.

Local Government Reorganisation Considerations

- Local Government Reorganisation (LGR) presents both risks and opportunities for the delivery of social housing services.
- The council must ensure that ongoing improvement efforts, particularly those related to safety, compliance, and tenant engagement are maintained without disruption during periods of transition.
- At the core of the Social Housing Regulatory Programme is a commitment to placing tenants and leaseholders at the centre of service design. This principle must continue to be clearly demonstrated in all ongoing discussions, particularly those influenced by LGR. This includes safeguarding the continuity of the Recovery Action Plan, maintaining strong relationships with regulators, and ensuring that any future governance arrangements uphold a clear focus on housing quality and the tenant voice.
- Consideration will also need to be given to how housing responsibilities, assets, and the Housing Revenue Account (HRA) Business Plan will be managed under the new unitary authority structures.
- Only one other council in Southern and Mid Staffordshire retains council-owned housing stock. Preliminary discussions have taken place, leading to a planned workshop aimed at mapping the key components of service alignment and transformation.

Impact Evaluation

- We will measure the impact of the Social Housing Regulatory Programme through a combination of performance data, tenant feedback, and regulatory oversight. Key indicators will include:
  - **Safety and Quality Metrics:** Tracking compliance with housing standards, including damp and mould, repairs, and contractor performance.
  - **Tenant Satisfaction:** Using surveys, complaints data, and engagement feedback to assess whether residents feel safer, better supported, and more informed.

- o **Regulatory Assurance:** Monitoring outcomes from the Regulator of Social Housing visits and ensuring actions from the Recovery Plan are completed and sustained.
- o **Programme Delivery:** Reviewing progress against milestones in the Recovery Action Plan and Communication and Engagement Plan, with regular reporting to senior leadership and Scrutiny.
- This approach will ensure that improvements are not only delivered but also felt by tenants, evidenced through data, and sustained through governance.

Appendices

Appendix 13 – Social Housing Regulatory Programme Dossier Summary Report August 2025

Recommendation Six

Review, develop and strengthen communication and consultation approaches.

Status: On Track

Peer Team Feedback: "We recommend that the council develops an overarching communications and consultation plan. This should help to further strengthen closer engagement with communities. Use the outcome of the 'honest conversations' project to inform approaches."

Progress Update

- The council has adopted a strategic, evidence-based approach to enhancing its communications and engagement activities. In response to the Corporate Peer Challenge, a targeted review was commissioned through the Local Government Association (LGA) and successfully concluded in June 2025.
- Feedback from the Communications Peer Review has directly shaped the development of a comprehensive, council-wide Communications Strategy, which is scheduled for Cabinet consideration in September 2025. Key recommendations included enhancing storytelling, strengthening consultation practices, and fostering greater internal ownership.
- The review also highlighted the importance of encouraging councillors to revisit social media training (this has been subsequently delivered) and advised the communications team to reassess the time allocated to social media output, with a view to creating capacity for more impactful and engaging communications.
- The newly developed Communications Strategy provides a clear and structured framework to strengthen the council's interactions with residents, partners, and staff. Designed for implementation across all service areas, the strategy places responsibility and accountability with individual service leads to ensure consistent and effective delivery.
- The Leader of the council has formally taken on the strategic role of Member Lead for Communications, providing oversight and accountability while actively driving forward the council's communication and engagement initiatives.
- Communications have been established as a standing agenda item at all leadership meetings, ensuring consistent focus and strategic alignment across senior discussions.
- A Year One Delivery Plan is currently being developed, informed by the peer review recommendations and aligned with corporate priorities, to ensure communication and engagement activities are both effective and measurable. The plan is closely integrated with the delivery of Local Government Reorganisation (LGR), the We Are Tamworth community cohesion strategy, devolution, and Community Governance Review (CGR). Resource allocation to support this work is presently under review.

- The strategy also draws on insights from the Honest Conversations Project and other recent engagement activities, ensuring the council's approach is informed by the lived experiences and expectations of Tamworth's diverse communities. The newly developed We Are Tamworth community cohesion strategy will be closely aligned with the Communications Strategy, with both strategies designed to be mutually reinforcing.
- A cross-service working group has been established to support the implementation of the strategy, facilitate the sharing of best practice, and monitor progress. This group will play a pivotal role in embedding the strategy across departments and promoting consistency in messaging and tone.
- A series of training and development sessions is being designed to enhance staff confidence and capability in delivering effective and inclusive communication. These sessions will include modules on plain English, digital engagement, and approaches to working with underrepresented groups.
- The council has invested in upgrading its digital engagement tools, including enhancements to the website, consultation platform, and social media analytics. These improvements are designed to support more interactive, accessible, and data-informed engagement with residents.
- Internal communications have been enhanced through the launch of a refreshed intranet, the introduction of regular staff briefings, and the rollout of a new internal newsletter. These improvements aim to ensure that staff are well-informed, actively engaged, and aligned with organisational priorities.
- The Communications Strategy is being positioned as a key enabler of the council's broader transformation agenda, underpinning efforts to promote transparency, build trust, and foster collaboration across all areas of service delivery.

Local Government Reorganisation Considerations

- Effective communication will be critical throughout the LGR process to help manage uncertainty, maintain public trust, and ensure that both staff and residents remain well-informed and engaged.
- The council's new Communications Strategy provides a robust foundation, offering a consistent and inclusive framework that is being systematically embedded across all service areas.
- The LGR Communications and Engagement Working Group is actively coordinating messaging across partner organisations and shaping engagement activities that support the development and delivery of the business case.
- Engagement activities will be tailored to meet the diverse needs of communities and service users, with a particular emphasis on transparency regarding governance changes, service continuity, and the preservation of local identity.
- Internal communications will play a critical role in supporting staff through periods of change, providing timely updates and clear, consistent messaging to promote understanding and engagement.

- Evaluation of LGR communications will encompass metrics such as reach, sentiment, and stakeholder feedback, supporting continuous improvement and ensuring alignment with the council's broader strategic objectives.

Impact Evaluation

- The development and implementation of the council-wide Communications Strategy marks a significant shift in how the organisation approaches communication and consultation.
- Senior leaders have been engaged throughout the process and will be actively embedding the strategy within their services, ensuring shared ownership and accountability.
- The impact of the strategy will be evaluated through a range of measures, including:
  - **Engagement Reach and Quality:** Monitoring participation in consultations, events, and digital platforms to assess breadth and depth of engagement.
  - **Resident Feedback:** Using surveys and sentiment analysis to understand public trust, satisfaction, and awareness of council communications.
  - **Internal Ownership:** Tracking how services adopt the strategy, including the use of plain English, inclusive language, and consistent messaging.
  - **Delivery Plan Progress:** Reviewing milestones and outputs from the Year-One Delivery Plan, with quarterly reporting to the Corporate Management Team (CMT) and Scrutiny.
- This approach will ensure that communication becomes a consistent, inclusive, and strategic strength across the organisation, supporting transparency, engagement, and service improvement.

Appendices

Appendix 14 – Communications Strategy 2025-2030

Recommendation Seven

Develop your overarching Town Centre Regeneration Strategy and use this as an opportunity to strengthen communication approaches in relation to town centre regeneration.

Status: On Track

Peer Team Feedback: "Continue the work (already started) to develop an overarching Regeneration Strategy, which seeks to masterplan development across the town and use this an opportunity to strengthen your communication approaches in relation to town centre regeneration."

Progress Update

- A draft Town Centre Regeneration Strategy and accompanying masterplan have been developed and are scheduled for adoption in November 2025. This strategic framework sets out a clear vision and objectives for the future regeneration of Tamworth's town centre. Once adopted, it will serve as a practical guide to inform and support the council's regeneration efforts, including the redevelopment of key sites such as Gungate and Ankerside.

- A series of workshops involving elected members and staff have played a key role in shaping the development of the strategy. Additional consultation will be undertaken with key stakeholders to ensure their feedback and comments are reflected in the final report.

- New internal governance arrangements are being established through the formation of the Tamworth Regeneration Board, comprising senior officers and elected members. This board will enable a strategic and corporate approach to regeneration while allowing individual workstreams to remain agile and maintain momentum.

- Moreover, a Regeneration Communications Strategy is being developed, building upon the communications plan previously used to support the delivery of the Future High Streets Fund. This strategy will outline the communications and engagement activities required for upcoming regeneration initiatives and identify the resources necessary to effectively implement them. Communications will be embedded in the work of the Regeneration Board to ensure transparency and consistency.

- The council is actively engaging with prospective developers and funders to gauge potential market interest in Gungate and Ankerside, supporting early-stage delivery planning and investment readiness.

- To support ongoing communications and engagement, the Transforming Tamworth project website has been refreshed and further enhanced. This platform will continue to serve as a central hub for regeneration updates, stakeholder engagement, and public consultation.

Local Government Reorganisation Considerations

- The Town Centre Regeneration Strategy reinforces Tamworth's strategic position within Local Government Reorganisation (LGR) by demonstrating strong place leadership, clear economic ambition, and a readiness for delivery. Through the identification of investable sites and regeneration priorities, the council will be well-positioned to influence future governance arrangements, funding decisions, and competitive bidding opportunities.
- As part of this approach, the council will seek to ensure that key regeneration sites are either under contract or development-ready, with the potential to generate revenue or capital. These assets will be instrumental in strengthening financial resilience and demonstrating Tamworth's contribution to broader placemaking and growth across Southern Staffordshire.

Impact Evaluation

- The Town Centre Regeneration Strategy has established a clear and shared vision for Tamworth's future, enabling strategic alignment across services and stakeholders.
- Confidence in the council's leadership has been strengthened, supporting more informed investment decisions and enhancing Tamworth's place leadership credentials.
- Stakeholders are now better positioned to engage with regeneration priorities and contribute to shaping outcomes.
- To evaluate impact going forward, the council will:
  - Monitor delivery milestones and progress against the masterplan.
  - Track stakeholder engagement and feedback through consultation exercises.
  - Assess investment interest and development activity linked to identified regeneration sites.
  - Review alignment with LGR priorities, including readiness of key sites and contribution to regional growth.
- This approach ensures that regeneration efforts are measurable, strategically driven, and responsive to Tamworth's evolving needs.

Appendices

Appendix 15 – Tamworth Town Centre Masterplan

Recommendation Eight

Use the Honest Conversations Project to build asset-based approaches to your work in communities and inform your community cohesion plan.

Status: On Track

Peer Team Feedback: "It is positive that the council have attracted external funding to commission a project to engage different communities in honest dialogue about living in Tamworth, strengths, opportunities and challenges. This should be used to inform the development of a 'strengths based' community cohesion strategy and action plan for Tamworth."

Progress Update

- The council has made strong progress in embedding the findings of the externally funded Honest Conversations Project, published in March 2025, into its approach to community cohesion. The project engaged diverse communities in open dialogue about life in Tamworth, highlighting strengths, opportunities, and challenges.
- Key themes for further consideration include the Summer 2024 unrest, tackling racism and prejudice, perceptions of community decline, and a shared sense of pride and potential.
- The council participated in Belong Network workshops with VCSE organisations and community members. In April 2025, Cabinet endorsed the report and approved a workplan focused on continued community engagement and positive activities to strengthen cohesion.
- The work is informing the development of the We Are Tamworth: Building Better Communities Strategy, due for Cabinet approval in October 2025. A dedicated cohesion conference on 16 July 2025 brought stakeholders together to shape the strategy's direction.
- An outline draft will be presented to the Executive Leadership Team (ELT) on 3 September 2025, with further input planned through community engagement.
- To support delivery of the We Are Tamworth: Building Better Communities Strategy, the council has undertaken a range of initiatives:
    - **Community Engagement:** Events like Kaleidoscope of Dreams, involving 22 schools.
    - **Crowdfunding:** Funding initiatives such as Spacehive continue to empower local communities, with two successful campaigns, and more underway (see We Are Tamworth crowdfunding platform).
    - **Capacity Building:** Training on managing difficult conversations, with accredited qualification in development.
    - **Governance and Oversight:** Regular meetings, KPIs, and grant monitoring.
    - **Funding Alignment:** The Community Recovery Spend Plan supports cohesion projects through March 2027.

- o **Business Engagement:** Collaboration with the business community through Keele University.
- These efforts are shaping a strengths-based approach to community development, supported by the Better Together strategic partnership, which coordinates work across five thematic areas: Health and Wellbeing, Nature and Environment, Children and Families, Prosperity and Place, and Community Safety.

Local Government Reorganisation Considerations

- Community cohesion will be vital throughout Local Government Reorganisation (LGR), helping to maintain public trust, preserve Tamworth's identity, and ensure service continuity. The council's proactive work through the Honest Conversations Project positions it as a leader in locality-based cohesion.
- Key considerations include:
  - o **Community Safety and Funding:** Continued collaboration and aligned funding from the Police and Crime Commissioner are essential.
  - o **Local Identity:** Tamworth's strengths-based approach ensures local voices are reflected in emerging governance models.
  - o **Health and Housing:** Work with the ICB and planning for diverse housing needs, including supported and private sector housing must continue.
  - o **Migration and Safeguarding:** Tamworth must advocate for local influence in asylum and safeguarding arrangements.
  - o **VCSE Support:** Clear, sustained funding is critical for voluntary and community partners.
  - o **Heritage and Representation:** The cohesion strategy will help safeguard Tamworth's unique identity in any future unitary structure.

Impact Evaluation

- The Honest Conversations Project has significantly influenced the council's approach to inclusive dialogue and the development of a strengths-based Community Cohesion Strategy. Engagement in Belong Network workshops and the publication of the Honest Conversations Report have provided valuable insights into community needs, challenges, and opportunities.
- To evaluate ongoing impact, the council will:
  - o Monitor engagement through participation in events like Kaleidoscope of Dreams and the We Are Tamworth crowdfunding initiative.
  - o Track training outcomes, including uptake and feedback from the 'difficult and challenging conversations' programme, and progress toward accredited qualifications.
  - o Use KPIs and grant monitoring to assess delivery partner performance, supported by strategic meetings and oversight.

- o Evaluate strategic influence, including how the We Are Tamworth: Building Better Communities Strategy shapes service delivery, investment, and perceptions of inclusion and trust.
- This approach ensures cohesion efforts are measurable, embedded, and responsive to the lived experiences of Tamworth's communities.

Appendices

Appendix 16 – Tamworth Honest Conversations Report

Recommendation Nine

Review your organisational structure and future ways of working, ensuring this aligns to/ enables delivery of your priorities and ambitions.

Status: On Track

Peer Team Feedback: "The aim should be to ensure that there is sufficient capacity and resource to delivery against agreed priorities."

Progress Update

- A People and Organisational Development Strategy and accompanying action plan have been developed and are scheduled for presentation to the Appointments and Staffing Committee in September 2025 for approval.
- External consultants have been commissioned to assist the Chief Executive in delivering the senior management restructure. An initial outline plan has received approval, and the necessary budget has been allocated in accordance with the council's scheme of delegation.
- The Corporate Management Team (CMT) has been involved from the outset, with clear communication channels and support mechanisms established to facilitate change and minimise resistance.
- The findings incorporating updated benchmarking, best practice insights, revised role profiles, and clarified role definitions have informed the structural changes. Following this, the Chief Executive presented a detailed report which was reviewed and approved by the Appointments and Staffing Committee on 12 August 2025.
- Skills mapping, succession planning, and change management processes are being implemented to proactively address potential leadership gaps and minimise knowledge loss during the restructure.
- Staff wellbeing is being prioritised as part of the change management process, supported by a comprehensive consultation approach designed to maintain morale and engagement throughout the transition.
- A phased implementation approach is being used to minimise disruption to service delivery, with interim arrangements considered where appropriate.

Local Government Reorganisation Considerations

- Southern and Mid Staffordshire local authorities are actively collaborating on proposals for Local Government Reorganisation (LGR). The council is currently evaluating its preferred option and assessing the benefits, risks, and implications to inform the final submission to central government.

- KPMG has been commissioned to support the development of a comprehensive business case, due for submission in November 2025. Several preparatory workstreams have been initiated, and the council is balancing its ongoing delivery and improvement priorities with the demands of LGR planning and transition.
- Internal resourcing to manage the transition is a key consideration. The establishment of a dedicated Project Management Office (PMO) as adopted by other councils undergoing reorganisation is under active review to ensure sufficient capacity and oversight.
- A dedicated People and Workforce workstream has been established as part of the LGR programme. Its purpose is to ensure that workforce-related implications, impacts, and opportunities are fully considered in the development of proposals for a unified and high-performing council. This includes sharing workforce data, conducting equality impact assessments, identifying risks, maintaining communication with staff and trade unions, and exploring organisational structure and culture options.

Impact Evaluation

- The ongoing review of the organisational structure and future ways of working practices is already delivering meaningful impact by ensuring alignment with the council's strategic priorities and long-term ambitions.
- The development of the People and Organisational Development Strategy, in conjunction with the senior management restructure, is establishing a more coherent framework for leadership, accountability, and capacity building across the council.
- Early engagement with CMT and the involvement of external consultancy support have contributed to shaping a phased and well-governed approach to organisational change.
- The creation of new leadership roles, including the new role of Assistant Director for Policy and Performance, is strengthening the council's ability to deliver on its corporate plan and transformation agenda.
- As the restructure progresses, the council will monitor impact through:
  - **Service Continuity:** Ensuring minimal disruption to delivery during transition phases.
  - **Leadership Capacity:** Assessing whether new structures provide the resilience and capability needed to meet future challenges.
  - **Staff Engagement and Wellbeing:** Using feedback mechanisms to track morale, clarity of roles, and support through change.
  - **Alignment with LGR:** Evaluating how the structure supports readiness for LGR and the demands of a future unitary model.
- This approach ensures that the council is not only fit for purpose today but is also positioned to adapt in a changing local government landscape.

Appendix 11 – People and OD Strategy 2025-2030

Recommendation Ten

Continue to strengthen the culture of assurance and good governance across the council, including how statutory officer functions work and are distributed across the authority.

Status: On Track

Peer Team Feedback: "This should be in line with the latest Lawyers in Local Government (LLG), Chartered Institute of Public Finance Accountants (CIPFA) and Society of Local Authority Chief Executives (SOLACE) guidelines. It will also be important to ensure the Member Development Plan provides training on audit and governance for all councillors, helping to ensure assurance and governance are seen as everyone's responsibility."

Progress Update

- Tamworth Borough Council continues to strengthen its culture of assurance and good governance through a series of targeted actions and structural reforms. Statutory Officers convene regularly through meetings, supported by a comprehensive member training programme that includes mandatory sessions for key committees. Annual training reviews are embedded within contractual arrangements to ensure ongoing compliance and effectiveness.

- The role of Head of Paid Service (HoPS) has been formally transferred to the Chief Executive, with the change documented in a report approved by both the Audit and Scrutiny Committee and Full Council in March 2025. The council's constitution was subsequently updated to reflect this arrangement, with revisions endorsed by Full Council in May 2025. To ensure continuity, a thorough handover was conducted between the Deputy Chief Executive and Chief Executive, establishing a clear understanding of duties, responsibilities, and accountabilities.

- The Monitoring Officer role is set to be enhanced as part of the senior management restructure, ensuring greater clarity, authority, and alignment with the council's governance framework.

- Corporate governance is being further strengthened through the establishment of thematic boards within the Corporate Management Team (CMT), alongside structured reviews of committee reports, at key stages, including pre-Cabinet briefings.

- Two Policy, Performance and Delivery Officers have been appointed to support the development and implementation of robust performance management reporting and to strengthen oversight of the council's corporate programme management approach.

- The Interim Audit Manager is actively reviewing future service delivery models in collaboration with Lichfield District Council, contributing to broader efforts to enhance governance and assurance arrangements.

- A review of the Audit and Governance Committee was undertaken to assess effectiveness, with an associated improvement plan formally approved in March 2025. Training was provided to

committee members in May 2025, and an Options Paper is currently being drafted, with a meeting scheduled with the Chief Executive to agree the proposed approach.

- An interim Section 151 Officer remains in post, with recruitment to the permanent role scheduled as part of the Senior Management Review (SMR) implementation. There has been no interruption in Section 151 provision, and appropriate delegation of responsibilities has remained in place throughout. The Annual Governance Statement was formally approved by the Audit and Governance Committee in June 2025.

- To further strengthen assurance and governance, the council will undertake a comprehensive review of the Member Development Plan later this year. This review will ensure that all councillors receive targeted training on audit and governance, reinforcing the principle that governance is a shared responsibility across the organisation. Audit and Governance training is currently available to committee members, and the forthcoming review will explore how this can be extended to all elected members.

Local Government Reorganisation Considerations

- During Local Government Reorganisation (LGR), the council must uphold strong assurance and governance by establishing clear leadership structures, implementing robust risk management and oversight mechanisms, and ensuring continuity of service delivery.

- This includes establishing programme boards, utilising risk registers and independent audits, ensuring legal and financial transparency, and actively engaging residents and staff throughout the process.

- Maintaining trust and accountability throughout the transition requires effective scrutiny, robust data governance, and clear public communication.

Impact Evaluation

- The council's strengthened governance arrangements have improved transparency, accountability, and organisational resilience. Regular Statutory Officer meetings, enhanced committee structures, and the introduction of thematic boards at CMT level have reinforced oversight and assurance.

- The appointment of dedicated officers and interim statutory roles has supported performance management and continuity.

- To evaluate impact, the council will continue to monitor:
  - Member engagement in training.
  - Implementation of the Audit and Governance Committee improvement plan.
  - Effectiveness of governance arrangements during LGR.
  - This structured approach ensures governance remains a strategic strength across the organisation.

Recommendation Eleven

Review the council's Overview and Scrutiny structures in support of your corporate priorities.

Status: On Track

Peer Team Feedback: "We heard particularly that there may be opportunities to review the Health and Wellbeing Overview and Scrutiny Committee to give it a greater focus on community wellbeing and community cohesion."

Progress Update

- Tamworth Borough Council undertook a comprehensive review of its Overview and Scrutiny structures to ensure alignment with the Corporate Plan 2025–2030. The review was scoped and validated through engagement with the Corporate Management Team (CMT) and Leadership Group, supported by weekly project meetings and overseen by the Assistant Director for Policy and Performance, acting as the designated Senior Responsible Officer.

- Surveys and focus groups involving elected members and officers were conducted to gather feedback and identify opportunities for improvement. The research incorporated best practice guidance from the Local Government Association (LGA), the Centre for Governance and Scrutiny, and neighbouring councils. Proposed options were tested through dedicated sessions, with regular briefings provided to the Leader and cross-party groups to ensure transparency and engagement.

- The proposed new approach received unanimous support from elected members and was positively received when presented to Corporate Scrutiny. Members expressed strong enthusiasm for the refreshed structure and its potential to enhance the effectiveness of scrutiny and strengthen alignment with corporate priorities.

- The council plans to implement the new scrutiny structure in November 2025, with October designated as a transitional period, subject to Full Council approval in September. To support effective implementation and promote a shared understanding of the revised approach, a joint training session for members and officers is scheduled for October.

- To support implementation, the findings and recommendations from the Corporate Peer Challenge were clearly aligned with the proposed changes, helping to build consensus and reduce resistance. The Monitoring Officer was actively engaged throughout the process to ensure legal compliance and consistency with the council's constitution.

Local Government Reorganisation Considerations

- The broader geographic and service coverage may necessitate additional resources for scrutiny, including the establishment of subcommittees and, where appropriate, temporary scrutiny arrangements.
- Newly elected councillors will require training to effectively scrutinise wider-ranging issues and may need to consider area-based scrutiny panels or community-focused working groups to support this function.

Impact Evaluation

- The implementation plan outlined in the review report provides a structured framework for delivering the new model, with defined actions covering committee remits, work planning, member development, reporting standards, and governance protocols.
- To evaluate impact going forward, the council will:
  - Monitor attendance rates at meetings and training sessions and member contributions.
  - Review the reduction in "for noting" items and the use of briefing notes.
  - Audit report formats and member satisfaction with clarity and usefulness.
  - Maintain and review the recommendation tracker, Cabinet response times, and implementation rates.
  - Ensure scrutiny meetings are aligned with quarterly performance reporting and held at least four times per year.
- This structured approach ensures that scrutiny remains a strategic enabler of transparency, performance, and continuous improvement across the organisation.

Appendices

Appendix 17 – Overview and Scrutiny Function Review Report

Recommendation Twelve

Develop a comprehensive plan to achieve digital transformation putting customers at the heart.

Status: On Track

Peer Team Feedback: "It is important that it aligns with the new corporate plan once agreed. It should ensure that the council has sufficient capacity and resource to achieve digital transformation that delivers innovative, efficient and effective service delivery to the customers."

Progress Update

- Tamworth Borough Council's ICT and Digital Strategy 2025–2030, along with its accompanying action plan, was formally approved by both the Corporate Management Team (CMT) and Cabinet in July 2025. The strategy outlines a clear vision for embedding technology to drive digital transformation and innovation, underpinned by secure and flexible ICT infrastructure aligned with the council's corporate priorities.
- The strategy supports the council's digital transformation agenda and was developed collaboratively across the organisation. Workshop sessions were held to shape the strategic framework and identify best practice. Extensive consultation was undertaken with key stakeholders, including the Assistant Director direct reports group, ICT team, directorate management teams, service-specific areas, and through close collaboration with the Head of Customer Experience. All feedback received was carefully considered and incorporated where appropriate.
- Initial transformation projects include enhancing customer contact, aiming to modernise how the council engages with residents using digital technology to improve customer service systems and processes. A dedicated project board has been established and meets regularly to oversee delivery and monitor progress, ensuring robust governance. An implementation plan is currently being developed in collaboration with the service provider, Netcall.
- Deployment of the new contact centre and resident hub is underway, supported by regular contract meetings to ensure effective oversight and coordination. The solution, delivered in partnership with Netcall, is designed to enhance customer experience, improve operational efficiency, and enable data-driven decision-making across the organisation.

Local Government Reorganisation Considerations

- A dedicated digital workstream is expected to be established as part of Local Government Reorganisation (LGR), with strategic leadership provided by the Head of Technology and Information Services.

- An initial meeting of IT leaders across Staffordshire councils has taken place, resulting in agreement to share information on systems, contracts, and strategic direction moving forward.
- Ensuring strong data governance including the establishment of data sharing agreements, and effective data capture and management is a key priority in preparation for the formation of a unitary council.
- Consideration is being given to transitioning beyond legacy systems, reviewing existing contracts, advancing longer-term strategic initiatives, and identifying opportunities for system alignment and commonality.
- Embedding effective cyber resilience measures across systems and processes.
- Ensuring continuity of service for both customers and staff, while safeguarding local knowledge and skills, with a strong emphasis on promoting digital inclusion.

Impact Evaluation

- The development of a comprehensive digital transformation plan will have a significant impact on the council, placing customer needs at the centre of service delivery. Key considerations include digital inclusion, addressing skills gaps, fostering a supportive culture, and maintaining robust cyber resilience.
- The establishment of a project board, procurement of a customer contact solution, and formal approval of the ICT and Digital Strategy 2025–2030 have collectively established a clear and structured framework to drive forward the council's digital transformation agenda.

Appendices

Appendix 18 – ICT and Digital Strategy 2025-2030

Conclusion

Tamworth Borough Council continues to demonstrate strong and sustained progress in addressing the recommendations of the Local Government Association's Corporate Peer Challenge. This Position Statement highlights the breadth and depth of work undertaken across the organisation to strengthen governance, enhance service delivery, and align with the strategic priorities outlined in the Corporate Plan 2025–2030.

The council has approached this work with openness, collaboration, and a commitment to continuous learning. Across all twelve recommendations, practical steps have been taken to embed meaningful change, supported by strong leadership, cross-service engagement, and a clear focus on outcomes. Notable progress in communications and engagement, financial resilience, and organisational development reflects a maturing and responsive council.

At the same time, the council acknowledges the significant challenges that remain. Its proactive response to the Social Housing Regulatory Programme, including a self-referral to the Regulator of Social Housing, demonstrates a commitment to transparency and improvement. Although the programme is currently flagged as 'Off Track', it remains under control and is supported by a robust Recovery Action Plan, strengthened governance through the Housing Advisory Board, and ongoing engagement with tenants and regulators. The council recognises that rebuilding trust and improving service quality in social housing is a long-term endeavour and remains focused on delivering measurable improvements in safety, satisfaction, and tenant voice. The forthcoming mock inspection and policy updates will be key milestones in demonstrating progress and sustaining momentum.

Significant strides have also been made in strengthening the council's asset management approach. Following the approval of the Asset Management Strategy and the commissioning of Arcadis to develop a comprehensive Asset Management Plan, the council is now equipped with a more strategic and evidence-based understanding of its asset base, including investment properties, heritage assets, and operational models. The formation of the Asset Strategy Steering Group and the integration of asset planning into broader financial and governance frameworks reflect a maturing approach to stewardship. As preparations for Local Government Reorganisation (LGR) continue, this work will be critical in ensuring assets support financial resilience, service continuity, and local identity. These areas require ongoing attention, strategic oversight, and careful planning to ensure long-term sustainability.
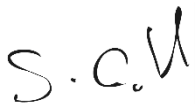
Tamworth Borough Council is actively preparing for the significant changes brought about by LGR. Our approach is structured, collaborative, and forward-looking, with a clear emphasis on preserving local identity, ensuring service continuity, and building strategic readiness. The council is contributing to regional planning efforts and has commissioned expert support to develop a comprehensive business case for Southern Staffordshire, due in November 2025. Dedicated lead officers are engaged in

workstreams across the organisation, reviewing governance, workforce, service redesign, and asset implications to ensure a smooth transition.

The establishment of a Programme Management Office (PMO) and the alignment of key strategies, including communications, digital transformation, and community cohesion, demonstrate the council's commitment to managing change effectively.

We recognise that LGR presents both risks and opportunities, but we remain focused on ensuring that Tamworth's voice, values, and priorities are reflected in any future arrangements. Looking ahead, the council is committed to evaluating the impact of its actions, not only to demonstrate progress but to ensure continued learning and evolution. This commitment to impact evaluation and self-awareness will remain central to our improvement journey.

Tamworth Borough Council welcomes continued dialogue with the Peer Team and partners as it works to build a more inclusive, accountable, and forward-looking council for the people of Tamworth.

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