

Bolton Council Peer Review Action Plan

December 2024



Peer Review Recommendation	CLT Lead
1. Develop the council’s hierarchy of strategic plans and strategies , starting with the refreshed place-based vision for 2040. This should then align to the new Corporate Plan.	Director of Corporate Resources
2. Increase the frequency and visibility of financial, performance and corporate risk management reporting to Cabinet, Corporate Leadership Team (CLT) and councillors.	Director of Corporate Resources Director of Public Health
3. Publish a four-year Medium-Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) aligned to the new Corporate Plan	Borough Treasurer
4. Enhance the role and profile of the Golden Triangle in line with the latest LGA, Chartered Institute of Public Finance Accountants (CIPFA) and the Society of Local Authority Chief Executives (SOLACE) guidelines.	Chief Executive
5. Continue to progress the work, already started, to strengthen the council’s framework of governance, risk management and control.	Director of Corporate Resources Director of Public Health
6. Ensure the role of the Standards Committee , beyond dealing with councillor complaints, is better understood and enhanced to promote high standards of conduct.	Borough Solicitor
7. Develop a Corporate Risk Register that is owned by both the Corporate Leadership Team and Cabinet.	Director of Corporate Resources Director of Public Health
8. Develop a council wide programme of transformation with a clear vision and aims	Director of Place
9. Establish a new Councillor Development Plan and programme of training	Borough Solicitor
10. Continue to develop the council’s proposals in respect of demand management , harnessing the opportunities arising from the newly established demand management boards in social care (adults and children)	Director of Adults, Communities and Integration Director of Childrens Services
11. Building on the strong community and locality based working initiatives in place, consider opportunities to strengthen direct resident engagement and consultation. This should include feedback to residents and stakeholders following consultations	Director of Adults, Communities and Integration
12. Continue to communicate and champion the work you do well to improve your profile both regionally and nationally	Director of Place
13. Develop a corporate workforce strategy	Director of Corporate Resources

1. Develop the council’s hierarchy of strategic plans and strategies, starting with the refreshed place-based vision for 2040. This should then align to the new Corporate Plan.

CLT LEAD: Director of Corporate Resources

Ref no.	Action	Delivery Lead(s)	Timescale
1.1	Develop the Council plan, ensuring this aligns with the emerging vision (Bolton2040) - with a clearer focus on the key corporate priorities for Council	Policy and Strategy	Within 6 months
1.2	Review and refresh the borough plan, ensuring this is engaged with and reflects the needs and aspirations of Bolton	Policy and Strategy	Within 6 months
1.3	Deliver a clear and outcomes-focussed communications plan to ensure all staff, members, and partners understand their role within delivery	Policy and Strategy Marketing, Events and Communications	Within 6 months
1.4	Ensure a consistent approach to service planning that aligns with the wider borough and organisation plans	Policy and Strategy	Within 9 months

- What does success look like:**
- A Corporate Plan where every member of staff understands their role in delivery
 - A co-produced Borough Plan underpinned with clear actions for delivery
 - A Corporate Plan that aligns with the Borough Plan

2. Increase the frequency and visibility of financial, performance and corporate risk management reporting to Cabinet, Corporate Leadership Team (CLT) and councillors.

CLT LEAD: Director of Corporate Resources and Director of Public Health

Ref no.	Action	Delivery Lead(s)	Timescale
2.1	Develop a refreshed business planning process which incorporates performance, risk and finance and when updates are going to CLT, Cabinet and ECM	Policy and Strategy	Within 3 months
2.2	Develop a refreshed performance dashboard which aligns with the Council's Corporate Plan	Policy and Strategy	Within 6 months
2.3	Establish performance boards in each directorate that work towards Bolton Council's performance framework – acting as an early warning system	Policy and Strategy	Within 6 months
2.4	Ensure performance and risk is robustly monitored internally and reported externally, through the development of an integrated dashboard so all the information covering KPIs, finance and risk and are all accessible in the same place.	Policy and Strategy Audit and Risk Finance	Within 9 months

What does success look like:

- Reports are synchronised and made available to CLT, elected members and residents on a regular basis
- A fully integrated dashboard aligned with the Corporate Plan which consolidates performance, finance and risk
- Streamlined processes and integrated systems reduce redundancy and improve the efficiency and effectiveness of monitoring and reporting activities.

3. Publish a four-year Medium-Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) aligned to the new Corporate Plan

CLT Lead: Borough Treasurer

Ref no.	Action	Delivery Lead(s)	Timescale
3.1	Develop a Medium-Term Financial Strategy that is aligned to the Corporate Plan for four years	Policy and Strategy Finance	Within 9 months
3.2	Align the transformation programme to the medium-term financial strategy to deliver services effectively	Transformation Finance	Within 9 months
3.3	Align the Council’s Medium Term Financial Strategy and Corporate Plan with the GMCA Integrated Settlement finance and outcomes framework (pending approval)	Finance	Within 9 months
3.4	Develop a social value strategy alongside the Medium-Term Financial Plan to review how Bolton can gain wider economic benefits	Policy and Strategy Finance	Within 9 months

What does success look like:

- A four year Medium-Term Financial Strategy that talks to the Council’s Corporate Plan whilst informing the transformation programme
- A social value strategy which allows the Council to improve its procurement processes and social value return

4. Enhance the role and profile of the Golden Triangle in line with the latest LGA, Chartered Institute of Public Finance Accountants (CIPFA) and the Society of Local Authority Chief Executives (SOLACE) guidelines.

CLT Lead: Chief Executive

Ref no.	Action	Delivery Lead(s)	Timescale
4.1	Schedule regular meetings between the Borough Solicitor, borough treasurer and corporate resource director (Corporate Governance Group) in line with LGA, CIPFA and SOLACE guidelines	Chief Executive	Within 3 months
4.2	Agree role and purpose of corporate governance group	Chief Executive	Within 3 months
4.3	Develop a process for reviewing key decision and undertaking relevant actions when necessary	Chief Executive	Within 6 months

What does success look like:

- An established governance group which has oversight of governance, financial and legal decisions made within the authority and permission to respond accordingly

5. Continue to progress the work, already started, to strengthen the council’s framework of governance, risk management and control.

CLT Lead: Director of Corporate Resources and Director of Public Health

Ref no.	Action	Delivery Lead(s)	Timescale
5.1	Undertake a review of the risk framework to build clarity on the accountability and responsibilities of those involved in risk management (including fraud risk assessments)	Audit and Risk	Within 6 months
5.2	Undertake review of the Annual Governance Statement process	Audit and Risk Legal	Within 9 months
5.3 (linked to 9.2)	Undertake training for members of the audit and standards committee	Democratic Services	Within 9 months
5.4 (linked to 2.4)	Ensure performance and risk is robustly monitored internally and reported externally, through the development of an integrated dashboard so all the information covering KPIs, finance and risk and are all accessible in the same place.	Policy and Strategy Audit and Risk Finance	Within 9 months

What does success look like:

- An effective AGS that provides the Corporate Governance Group with assurance for Council governance and decision making
- A refreshed risk framework that reflects the Councils operating environment and supports in identifying and responding to risk
- A fully integrated dashboard aligned with the Corporate Plan which consolidates performance, finance and risk

6. Ensure the role of the Standards Committee, beyond dealing with councillor complaints, is better understood and enhanced to promote high standards of conduct.

CLT Lead: Borough Solicitor

Ref no.	Action	Delivery Lead(s)	Timescale
6.1	Undertake a review the code of conduct in line with the LGA’s model code	Democratic Services	Within 6 months
6.2 (linked to 9.2)	Review training as part of the new councillor development plan and programme	Democratic Services	Within 12 months

What does success look like:

- Improved understanding from elected members and the role of themselves and the standards committee

7. Develop a Corporate Risk Register that is owned by both the Corporate Leadership Team and Cabinet.

CLT Lead: Director of Corporate Resources and Director of Public Health

Ref no.	Action	Delivery Lead(s)	Timescale
7.1 (linked to 5.1)	Develop a corporate risk register alongside the refreshed risk framework which incorporates both corporately owned risks and high-level risk areas within directorates	Audit and Risk	Within 3 months
7.2 (linked to 2.1)	Develop a refreshed business planning process which incorporates performance, risk and finance and when updates are going to CLT, Cabinet and ECM	Policy and Strategy	Within 3 months
7.3	Integrate directorate risk management into performance boards to review alongside performance and financial management and escalate corporately as appropriate	Policy and Strategy Audit and Risk	Within 6 months
7.4	Undertake a review of business continuity plan and process to reassess high risk service activity and contingency plans to these	Audit and Risk	Within 9 months

What does success look like:

- A corporate risk register that supports the organisations decision making
- Refreshed business continuity plans to identify high risk areas and contingency plans

8. Develop a council wide programme of transformation with a clear vision and aims

CLT Lead: Director of Place

Ref no.	Action	Delivery Lead(s)	Timescale
8.1	Align the transformation programme to the refreshed Corporate Plan, Medium Term Financial Plan and Corporate Risk Register	Transformation	Within 9 months
8.2	Agree and deliver high priority areas of focus within the change and digital programme for the next three years	Transformation	Within 9 months
8.3	Identify key metrics within the change management programme which demonstrate impact	Transformation	Within 9 months
8.4	Develop a transformation strategy and delivery plan for the organisation, maximising the opportunities to transform and modernise the Council	Transformation	Within 12 months

What does success look like:

- A transformation programme fully aligned to the Council’s key strategic plans

9. Establish a Councillor Development Plan and programme of training

CLT Lead: Borough Solicitor

Ref no.	Action	Delivery Lead(s)	Timescale
9.1	Review the current member training and development programme through corporate leadership and elected member engagement, identify and capture training and skills development needs.	Democratic Services	Within 6 months
9.2	Following the review, develop and implement a member training and development programme, with support of LGA resources, with a focus on: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Core training, including governance, finances, performance, risk and community alliances • Role specific training • Review and refresh of the induction process • More regular staff engagement and site visits 	Democratic Services	Within 12 months

What does success look like:

- A refreshed councillor development plan and programme which enables elected members to operate effectively within their job

10. Continue to develop the council’s proposals in respect of demand management, harnessing the opportunities arising from the newly established demand management boards in social care (adults and children)

CLT Lead: Director of Adults, Communities and Integration and Director of Childrens Services

Ref no.	Action	Delivery Lead(s)	Timescale
10.1	Review and develop demand strategies across Adult and Children Services which aligns to the Council’s MTFS	Commissioning and Transformation	Within 12 months
10.2	Develop our strategic approach to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Temporary accommodation • Commissions and Sufficiency Strategy • Family Help (Early Intervention) • Live Well at home (Adults) 	Commissioning and Transformation	Within 12 months

What does success look like:

- Reduction in use of external placements
- Reduction in costs of placements

11. Building on the strong community and locality based working initiatives in place, consider opportunities to strengthen direct resident engagement and consultation. This should include feedback to residents and stakeholders following consultations.

CLT Lead: Director of Adults, Communities and Integration

Ref no.	Action	Delivery Lead(s)	Timescale
11.1	Agree a set of engagement principles across partners to ensure a more concise and consistent approach to future resident engagement and co-production	Policy and Strategy	Within 6 months
11.2	Refresh the Council’s consultation and engagement process including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A calendar of events to make consultation and engagement more meaningful • A mechanism for communicating back to residents • Training for staff and members • Adopting best practices from partners and neighbouring LAs 	Policy and Strategy	Within 12 months
11.3	Better align the relationship between the council’s internal communication, engagement and consultation functions	Marketing, Events and Communication	Within 12 months

What does success look like:

- A refreshed consultation and engagement process within the Council which enables consultations to be undertaken in a timely manner and allows residents to understand the impact of each one
- An agreed set of engagement principles across partners to formalise ways of engaging residents in future

12. Continue to communicate and champion the work you do well to improve your profile both regionally and nationally

CLT Lead: Director of Place

Ref no.	Action	Delivery Lead(s)	Timescale
12.1	Agree ownership and actions amongst partners for delivering The Bolton Story framework and the governance that strategical owns this	Marketing, Events and Communication	Within 6 months
12.2	Showcase success stories and cases studies within the Council to highlight the impact, including awards and recognitions	Marketing, Events and Communication	Within 6 months
12.3	Collaborate with regional and national media to highlight significant achievements, events and filming opportunities	Marketing, Events and Communication	Within 12 months
12.4	Review the Councils communications strategy, making sure this aligns to The Bolton Story and wider Council plans and strategies	Marketing, Events and Communication	Within 12 months

What does success look like:

- An agreed language for supporting the borough, resulting in more collaborative bids, awards and recognition both regionally and nationally
- A communication strategy that fully aligns to the Corporate Plan and Bolton story

13. Develop a corporate workforce strategy

CLT Lead: Director of Corporate Resources

Ref no.	Action	Delivery Lead(s)	Timescale
13.1	Develop a corporate workforce strategy that pulls together directorate strategies and includes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staff recruitment • Retention • Succession planning • Knowledge sharing • Staff survey feedback 	Human Resources	Within 9 months
13.2	Review the Council’s Values for Behaviours framework and develop a comprehensive communication strategy alongside to include case studies of good work across the authority	Human Resources	Within 12 months

What does success look like:

- A refreshed Corporate strategy which reflects the needs of all directorate requirements and allows the Council to market itself as an employer of choice