

# Public Document Pack

Your ref  
Our ref  
Ask for Mark Hooper  
Email mark.hooper@lichfielddc.gov.uk



District Council House, Frog Lane  
Lichfield, Staffordshire WS136YU

Customer Services 01543 308000  
Direct Line 01543 308064

Monday, 28 February 2022

Dear Sir/Madam

## CABINET

A meeting of the Cabinet has been arranged to take place on **TUESDAY, 8TH MARCH, 2022 at 6.00 PM IN THE COUNCIL CHAMBER** District Council House, Lichfield to consider the following business.

Access to The Council Chamber is via the Members' Entrance.

Yours faithfully

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Christie Tims'.

Christie Tims  
**Chief Operating Officer**

**To: Members of Cabinet**

Councillors Pullen (Chairman), Eadie (Vice-Chair), Cox, Lax, Smith, Strachan and A Yeates



[www.lichfielddc.gov.uk](http://www.lichfielddc.gov.uk)



[/lichfielddc](https://www.facebook.com/lichfielddc)



[lichfield\\_dc](https://twitter.com/lichfield_dc)



MyStaffs App

## AGENDA

1. Apologies for Absence
2. Declarations of Interest
3. Events Policy Update 3 - 18
4. Corporate Peer Challenge Action Plan 19 - 48
5. Community Power Strategy 49 - 56



## Events Policy Update

Cabinet Member for Economic Development, Leisure & Local Plan



Date:	8 March 2022
Agenda Item:	3
Contact Officer:	Simon Fletcher / Ben Percival / Gareth Davies
Tel Number:	01543 308 001
Email:	<a href="mailto:Simon.fletcher@lichfielddc.gov.uk">Simon.fletcher@lichfielddc.gov.uk</a> <a href="mailto:Ben.percival@lichfielddc.gov.uk">Ben.percival@lichfielddc.gov.uk</a> <a href="mailto:Gareth.davies@lichfielddc.gov.uk">Gareth.davies@lichfielddc.gov.uk</a>
Key Decision?	YES
Local Ward Members	All

**CABINET**

### 1. Executive Summary

- 1.1 Following a review of performance in 2021, the Events Policy has been updated to provide a simpler, more customer centric document that seeks to support event organisers whilst managing the impact of events on the district.

### 2. Recommendations

- 2.1 That Cabinet approves the update to the former Events Policy and Events Guide to a single document: the *Guide to Putting on an Event or Festival in Lichfield District* presented as Appendix 1.
- 2.2 That Cabinet delegates the approval of event applications to a panel of three officers selected and lead by the Events Officer. Any recommendations to refuse event applications will be confirmed by the Head of Operational Services.

### 3. Background

- 3.1 The previous iteration of the Events and Festivals Policy was approved in draft form by Cabinet 8 October 2020, with authority delegated to the Cabinet Member and Head of Service to adopt the policy following consultation. The policy was in effect throughout 2021 and following a review of the impact of the policy, an opportunity to review and enhance the policy was identified.
- 3.2 It is proposed that the Events Policy be replaced with a more customer-centric *Guide to Putting on an Event or Festival in Lichfield District* intended to provide more support and guidance for event organisers and seek to better steer organisers through the process. The guide is presented as Appendix 1. The scoring matrix against which events are evaluated is presented as Appendix 2.
- 3.3 Following feedback from the 2021 events programme, the guide includes a number of key amendments to the previous policy. Key changes include:
- Emphasising the role of the new Events Officer to advise and support event organisers
  - Seeking to achieve a greater dispersal of events across District Council Parks and across the district more broadly.

- Approval of events applications will be delegated to a panel of officers only – elected members will not have a role in the approval of event applications.
- In the event that the officer panel cannot agree / prioritise applications, the matter will be escalated to the Council’s Leadership Team.
- Any recommendations to decline an event application will be agreed by the Head of Operational Services.
- The removal of application windows – whilst these sought to regulate applications, they instead built-in delay and backlog
- That hire fees are to be paid in full at the time of booking – this will help manage the number of events booked by a single organiser in place of the application window.

3.4 Street Trading is the purview of the Regulatory and Licensing Committee and a report outlining changes to Street Trading will be presented to their next meeting.

Alternative Options	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Retain the current policy</li> <li>2. Remove the policy and allow individual services to manage events within their own remit without central coordination – Parks Team manage parks events etc</li> </ol>
Consultation	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Leadership Team</li> <li>2. Member working group</li> </ol>
Financial Implications	<p>There is an Approved Revenue Budget of <b>£20,000</b> per annum to facilitate and support the delivery of events.</p> <p>In addition, to implement a more collaborative approach with events that aims to increase visitors to the District and support new events in coming forward, an additional Revenue Budget of <b>£50,000</b> per annum has been included in the approved Medium Term Financial Strategy from 2022/23.</p>
Approved by Section 151 Officer	Yes
Legal Implications	None
Approved by Monitoring Officer	Yes
Contribution to the Delivery of the Strategic Plan	The proposal will help to support the council’s ambitions to encourage economic growth and enhance the district for all.
Equality, Diversity and Human Rights Implications	There are no equality, diversity and human rights implications; service delivery to residents is unaffected.
Crime & Safety Issues	There are no crime and safety implications; service delivery to residents is unaffected.
Environmental Impact	The sustainability of events is included in the scoring matrix
GDPR / Privacy Impact Assessment	None

--	--

	Risk Description & Risk Owner	Original Score (RYG)	How We Manage It	Current Score (RYG)
A	The relaxation of the application process delivers poorer quality events	Impact: yellow Likelihood: yellow Severity: yellow	Maintain rigorous application scrutiny. Bonds paid for parks events / full payment up-front	Impact: yellow Likelihood: green Severity: green
B	Noise complaints from events	Impact: yellow Likelihood: yellow Severity: yellow	Encourage events to spread across the district Conditions on noise limits included in event licenses	Impact: yellow Likelihood: green Severity: green

None	Background documents <i>Appendix 1 Guide to Putting on an Event or Festival in Lichfield District</i>
------	--

None	Relevant web links Any links for background information which may be useful to understand the context of the report
------	--

This page is intentionally left blank



# **DRAFT**

## **Guide to Putting on an Event or Festival in Lichfield District**

December 2021

Section	Text
<p><b>Introduction</b></p>	<p>Welcome to Lichfield District Council’s guide to putting an event or festival on in the district. Events and festivals are an important part of our landscape and we recognize the importance that events and festivals play in our collective cultural and economic wellbeing.</p> <p>This guide is designed to support event organisers in the process of planning and operating a large public outdoor event or festival in Lichfield District.</p> <p>Our aim is to have a continual, engaging and varied events programme that helps build on our existing heritage, tourism and cultural offer. We want to encourage a vibrant annual events calendar; with an exciting mix of music, social and community events that benefit our residents, businesses, street traders and visitors. We are committed to mitigating any potential adverse impacts of events on residents and businesses.</p> <p>The district plays host to a large and varied number of events and festivals every year, from commercial events to local charity events. In addition, we host one-off occasions such as the 2012 Olympic Torch Relay. These events attract investment and visitors from a wide area.</p> <p>This guide provides information to ensure that events are planned and run smoothly, and sets out the processes and procedures that apply in assessing which events take place in the district, in particular where events are proposed on Council land or where we have some form of control e.g. Consented Streets.</p> <p>The guide should be read alongside the district council’s approved policy on events and festivals which can be viewed at <a href="http://lichfielddc.gov.uk/Lichfield-District-Events-and-Festivals-Policy-and-Procedure.docx">Lichfield District Events and Festivals Policy and Procedure.docx (lichfielddc.gov.uk)</a></p>
<p><b>What we mean by Events &amp; Festivals</b></p>	<p>1. For the purpose of this policy an event or festival is classed as: <i>An outdoor event that has 500 people or more in attendance at any one time during its staging, that is open to the general public and involves one or more consented activities (street trading, alcohol or entertainment)</i></p> <p>This policy is not applicable to events that will serve less than 500 attendees at any one time, street parties for national celebrations, street play/games, commemorative parades or organised protests.</p> <p>For indoor events with less than 500 attendees there is the potential for us to hold a register of suitable indoor premises across the district that have an appetite to host events. The Events Officer would then signpost events to these premises.</p> <p>If the activity is covered by an existing premise license, then a new application would be required for a temporary event notice.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Events can take place on Council land, the highway or on private land (including land owned or controlled by other local authorities).</li> <li>• Depending on the location and type of event in question, various permissions and consents will be required to allow an event to take place alongside the approval of the respective landowner to use their property.</li> <li>• These permissions ensure that people intending to access and enjoy events can do</li> </ul>



	<p>so in a safe and secure manner but also that the impacts of events can be managed so as not to cause harm to local amenity; including that of residents and business.</p> <p>Working with other partners in the district, we are keen to attract a good range of high standard events – hopefully recurring every year. We want to see events operated by experienced and knowledgeable organisers.</p> <p>Examples of the types of events we would like to encourage are set out below:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Events that help promote the district and raise its profile nationally and regionally, i.e. Music (Fuse festival, Lichfield proms, Crooked House), film, book, comedy, food &amp; drink festivals, continuation of the annual ‘Cars in the Park’.</li> <li>• Events that promote quality of life improvements including carbon reduction and health and well-being, i.e. healthy/organic/local food festival, yoga, sport, etc.</li> <li>• Events which put community engagement and cohesion at their heart – festive and celebratory events, i.e. Christmas markets where we showcase local entrepreneurship, business, and produce as well as the continuation of the annual Lichfield Greenhill Bower and Carters Steam Fun Fair.</li> <li>• Events that deliver and help inspire sporting opportunities – sport festivals where we work with sports teams to visit schools to inspire children and increase participation, marathons/half marathons, fun runs, torch relay events.</li> <li>• Events that showcase culture and artistic expression, i.e. food/music festivals, live comedy, pop-up art galleries.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Considering putting an event on</b></p>	<p>The first point of contact for any new or returning event organiser is our Events Officer: <a href="mailto:events.officer@lichfielddc.gov.uk">events.officer@lichfielddc.gov.uk</a>.</p> <p>Early engagement with the Events Officer is critical to the delivery of a successful event. They are a valuable source of information and guidance and will signpost organisers to the most appropriate venue for their event within the district.</p> <p>Our Events Officer will advise and guide applicants, however planning the event remains the responsibility of the event organiser. This is particularly the case where statutory consents are required – many have strict timescales which you must comply with.</p>
<p><b>Applying and receiving consent to hold an event</b></p>	<p>Event organisers who are interested in putting on an event in Lichfield district on Council-owned land or controlled property will be required to in the first instance submit details of their proposal via an online form available on our website.</p> <p>We need you to apply for consent when you are seeking to hold an event. This helps us:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Coordinate multiple events across the district</li> <li>• Avoid event (type/venue) clashes</li> <li>• Ensure events on our land meet our aims</li> </ul> <p>A two-stage process has been implemented for large outdoor public events on District Council owned land or a location which the Council has some form of control over.</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• First you must submit an Expression of Interest. If this is supported, then you</li> <li>• Submit a full application</li> </ul> <p>Both steps can be completed online at: <a href="http://lichfielddc.gov.uk">lichfielddc.gov.uk</a></p> <p><b>Prior to making an application, event organisers are encouraged to discuss their ideas with our Events Officer.</b></p>
<p><b>Stage 1 – Expression of Interest</b></p>	<p>All applications are evaluated against a set of criteria and a scoring matrix, and a decision is then made as to whether it is deemed acceptable. Full details of the criteria and scoring matrix are set out below.</p> <p>Assessing Expressions of Interest Applications (Stage 1) Expressions of Interest will be scored against:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Economic benefits that will be generated by the event</li> <li>• The organisers level of experience and past performance in hosting events; including whether they owe us money from previous events.</li> <li>• The financial viability of the event</li> <li>• How the event will help promote the District and encourage community engagement</li> <li>• The environmental impacts of the event</li> </ul> <p>All expressions of interest will be evaluated against a set of criteria linked to the aforementioned themes and a scoring matrix will be used to determine whether an event proposal is acceptable or not. We reserve the right to reject any applications that are not considered to meet minimum standards of compliance/viability at stage 1. Our Events Officer will be able to provide further detail on the assessment criteria for the above.</p>
<p><b>Stage 1 – Scoring Matrix</b></p>	<p>The 5 criteria above will collectively form the basis of a scoring exercise.</p> <p>Scoring allows us to differentiate applications made for the same venue at the same time – although the Events Officer will seek to avoid such clashes by signposting to alternative venues/dates.</p> <p>The scoring also provides an assessment of an organiser’s ability to deliver a successful event; we reserve the right to refuse applications if the applicant cannot evidence a level of competence needed for the scale of their event.</p>
<p><b>Stage 2 – Full Event Application</b></p>	<p>Once a proposed event has been accepted in principle, the applicant will be invited to make a full application for the necessary formal consents/permissions.</p> <p>This application will need to be accompanied by the necessary financial deposits. It should be noted that passing the appraisal does not guarantee that an event will be granted approval and can take place. This will depend on a full, detailed application meeting the relevant regulatory requirements.</p> <p>This application must be submitted within four weeks of an in-principle decision being communicated to an organiser.</p>

	<p>An Event Management Plan (EMP) will be required to be submitted alongside other information.</p> <p>Full applications must be made via our website <a href="http://www.lichfielddc.gov.uk">Alcohol, event and entertainment licences (lichfielddc.gov.uk)</a></p> <p>Once an application has been agreed in principle, the hire fee is to be paid in full before the event is confirmed.</p>
<p><b>Event Management Plan</b></p>	<p>The Event Management Plan is to detail how the event is going to be organised and managed including in respect of health and safety arrangements.</p> <p>For information of what an EMP includes and how to prepare one, please see: <a href="http://www.lichfielddc.gov/emp">www.lichfielddc.gov/emp</a></p> <p>Some additional guidance on the EMP is presented as Appendix 1 to this document. These reflect some aspects that have previously presented challenges to events. Appendix 1 also includes details of some of the statutory permissions that event organisers must secure – these are independent to the event application process and are the sole responsibility of the event organiser to secure.</p> <p>The EMP will be assessed by us and consulted on with other relevant partner organisations concerned to ensure events can take place safely and will not impact adversely on the amenity of an area and its residents. Partner organisations include the Police, Fire and Rescue Service, the Highway Authority etc.</p> <p>Depending on the size and duration of an event it may also be necessary to hold a meeting between the event organisers and the Safety Advisory Group (SAG). The SAG is made up of representatives of the Council and partner organisations.</p>
<p><b>Appendix 1</b></p>	<p><b>Initial Event Guidance</b></p> <p><b>Traffic Management including Road Closures</b></p> <p>If an event is planned for within or on a public highway, event organisers must assess the impact on the road network. As part of the submitted EMP a Traffic Management Plan needs to be prepared.</p> <p>We can permit a road closure for a temporary period to allow an event to take place. To request this, you must make an application.</p> <p>We cannot approve overnight road closures and we may also refer applications that require the closure of major roads or where disruption will be prolonged and widespread to Staffordshire County Council as Highways Authority.</p> <p><b>Applying for a Temporary Road Closure</b> Applications must be made using an online form on the Council’s website – <a href="http://www.lichfielddc.gov.uk/roadclosureform">www.lichfielddc.gov.uk/roadclosureform</a></p> <p>Before submitting an application please view the highway roadwork interactive mapping system at <a href="https://one.network/">https://one.network/</a> to ensure there are no other road works or events booked on the dates required.</p>

When completing the form, ensure you have the correct days and dates of closure, the accurate name of every road to be closed, and the exact times required (including setting up and closing times). In locations where access is required by residents and businesses, consider carefully how you will maintain such access including access for the emergency services, should the need arise.

The police will be consulted on any application received and their views requested. The Council's Regulatory team will also be notified and consulted to ensure that relevant licensing and public safety matters are being addressed.

It is the event organisers responsibility to notify residents, taxi companies and local business that could be affected by a planned road closure. It is recommended that this is carried out as soon as is possible after a closure is approved. In addition, Event organisers will be sent a road closure notice and will be required to display this notice on the affected roads at least 14 days before the event occurs.

### **Street Trading and Licences**

We have adopted a Consented Street policy across the district towards street trading. This means that any person(s) wishing to sell, exposing or offering for sale any article must hold a valid street trading consent from us.

Street trading rules are applied to ensure public safety, prevention of crime and disorder and prevention of public nuisance.

Further details on street trading can be found at [www.lichfielddc.gov.uk/streettrading](http://www.lichfielddc.gov.uk/streettrading)  
It is strongly advised that event organisers contact the Council's Licensing team when they are in the planning stages of their event. Our Events Officer can help you to do this.

### ***The Licensing Act 2003***

The Licensing Act 2003 covers the sale of alcohol, provision of late-night refreshment, provision of entertainment by way of live and recorded music, films, plays, dancing, boxing, and wrestling and provision of facilities for dancing and music. You need to ensure you have the appropriate license which is influenced by things like the size and duration of your event.

### **Noise Nuisance**

Events have the potential to cause noise nuisance to residents and the general amenity of an area. When looking to hold an event and deciding on its location organisers must consider the proximity of residents and how noise effects could be suitably mitigated.

Key considerations:

- Where a site is large, locating noise sources at the furthest point from residential properties is strongly advised. In general, no music should be audible from nearest noise sensitive premises from 11pm onwards. If the intention is to continue playing music after this time a location should be chosen which allows this to take place without harm to residents or the area in general.
- The volume of any music should be controlled. We may impose a noise limit

	<p>and to ensure compliance a noise limiter or use of other technology may be applied.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• The placement of any stage needs to be carefully considered particularly where amplified sound is being used. Speakers should be located as far away as possible from surrounding residential properties.</li><li>• Ideally any need for an electricity supply should be met by use of the mains supply. If generators must be utilised these should be chosen based on their noise emissions and the quietest possible selected.</li><li>• If your event is a concert, you may need to appoint noise consultants with experience of limiting off-site noise. They should be able to both minimize the off-site impact and demonstrate you are meeting your license conditions.</li></ul> <p>Full details of noise issues and how these will be addressed must be included in the EMP. Early engagement with the Council’s Environmental Protection team is advisable should there be any doubt about the location of your proposed event or how noise issues will be dealt with.</p> <p>Event organisers must communicate with all nearby residents at least one month before an event is scheduled to take place, ensuring that they are informed of the planned activity and measures being taken to limit noise emissions. A contact name and number should be provided for any complaints to be raised whilst the event is underway.</p> <p><b>Sustainability and Environmental Impact</b></p> <p>We have approved a sustainable events policy intended to ensure that the environmental impacts of hosting events and festivals is properly considered in all aspects of planning for and delivering events.</p> <p>There are key considerations and actions that should be factored in to running an event:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Choose a location and facilitate infrastructure which allows people where possible to walk and cycle to access an event</li><li>• Maximise the use of recycled materials in the staging of an event</li><li>• In terms of site layout seek to minimize the chances of harm to the natural environment</li><li>• Waste products that cannot be recycled at or after the event must be safely and securely disposed of off-site.</li></ul> <p><b>Engaging with local businesses</b></p> <p>We want to see events that also benefit local businesses. For events that take place in the streets our events officer will engage with businesses in the area the event is taking place to encourage and facilitate their involvement. Where premises-based businesses decide to extend the trading activities outside their premises on the days of events and trade, no street trading consents will be issued for these locations.</p> <p><b>Engaging with local residents</b></p> <p>We want to ensure that residents are considered and made aware of local events, particularly where there is a road closure. Our event officer will be contacting residents in the location where the event is taking place and offering them opportunities to raise their concerns and for these to be addressed as far as possible.</p> <p><b><i>Waste/litter collection/recycling</i></b></p>
--	--

Event organisers will be responsible for providing sufficient and suitable waste bins; making sure litter is picked during and after the event including litter which is blown/strewn across adjoining property; and ensuring that waste is removed from the site by a reputable company holding the appropriate waste carrier licence. Ground protection should be put in place to prevent spills and staining.

All waste must be removed from site no later than the intended and agreed clean-up day.

Enough marshals should be employed to ensure litter picking and waste collection duly takes place. Any costs incurred by us after the event from having to deal with outstanding waste issues will be recharged to the organiser and recouped.

Our Street scene and waste departments can provide a quote for waste support, including supplying bins, litter picking and the removal of waste and materials that can be recycled.

<https://www.lichfielddc.gov.uk/street-cleansing-litter-graffiti/street-cleansing-services/3>

#### ***Toilet facilities***

When planning an event, organisers should consider the need for toilet facilities and make appropriate provision, particularly where the timing of an event may mean that nearby public conveniences are not available. For events serving 500 attendees or more at least one accessible toilet must be provided for people with disabilities.

#### **Car Parking**

As mentioned earlier in this guide, the expectation is that events will be held in locations where possible that minimise the need for private vehicle travel allowing people to walk and cycle. However, it is accepted that certain events may generate car journeys and people seeking to park their vehicles. Event organisers will need to consider the potential parking implications of their event and determine whether arrangements need to be made to meet demands.

Where our public car parks are available use can be made of these. However, it is advised that event organisers liaise with our Car Parking Manager as early as possible in the planning of an event to discuss likely demands on public car parks.

It should also be noted in the context of ensuring parking needs can be met that on-street and off-street parking enforcement regimes exist in the district. Normal enforcement will take place whilst events are being held and charges will be applied to cars not parked in designated parking bays on-street or off-street.

#### **Insurance**

Organisers must ensure that any event is adequately and properly insured, and that enough cover is in place to indemnify against any civil litigation claims. The type and level of insurance required will depend on the event you are organising, and the risks involved.

If the event is held on Council-owned land or property you will be required as a minimum to demonstrate you have public liability insurance to a level appropriate to your event. Once your full event application has been submitted to us, our Insurance Officer will advise what level of public liability cover is required.

	<p>You will need to provide confirmation of insurance cover at least one month before the event takes place.</p> <p>Event organisers will also be required to check that any contractors engaged in any event are suitably insured too e.g. caterers, entertainments etc.</p> <p><b>Funding your Event</b> It will be the responsibility of an event organiser to cover all the costs of their event. This includes but is not limited to, infrastructure, hire of land, road closures, traffic management arrangements, waste removal, toilet provision, cleaning plus requisite street trading licences and other consents. We will not be liable for any costs incurred by the event organisers or costs falling due to the defaulting of an event organiser.</p> <p>The assumption is that events will meet their costs with no public subsidy involved. We have agreed an annual budget of £20,000 to assist with the set-up costs of new events across the district. If an event organiser is proposing an event which falls within the scope of being deemed a large outdoor event, then an application could be made to us for grant-aid under this budget. Applications will be judged on their merits and there is no guarantee that a bid will be successful. We will not seek to reduce any of its agreed fees and charges to facilitate an event or events.</p> <p><b>Promoting your Event</b> Once an event organiser has had their event application confirmed they will want to commence promoting the event itself. No event promotion must take place before acceptance of the event has been confirmed.</p> <p>Our Visitor Economy team will be pleased to help organisers promote their event and offer a number of marketing opportunities. Organisers may wish to add their event to the What’s On section of the Visit Lichfield website. This can be accessed at <a href="http://www.visitlichfield.co.uk">www.visitlichfield.co.uk</a> In addition, we have large followings on the Visit Lichfield social media platforms and would be happy to highlight an event on these channels. A further opportunity is via the regular e-newsletters that we prepare and circulate to tourism businesses and consumers.</p> <p>In any advertising or other promotional literature, event organisers must not state or imply that an event is supported, sponsored or endorsed by the District Council or make use of our logo or any part of our corporate identity without having sought and received prior permission from the Events Officer.</p>
<p><b>Appendix 2 – Council land available for hire for events</b></p>	<p><b>Beacon Park:</b> Beacon Park is our principal event space. The park has a strong events pedigree, and benefits from direct access to the city centre. The 70-acre scale means that Beacon Park can accommodate large-scale, high footfall events.</p> <p><b>Noise Rate:</b> The acceptable level of noise for events is subject to a range of factors – number of louder events, duration of event, operating hours, genre of music</p>

etc. Based on feedback from previous events, upper noise limits will be set and enforced for events Beacon Park.

Where event organisers are intending to deliver events at this upper limit, we will seek to distribute these events across the year.

In addition, where event organisers seeking events at (or above) this upper limit, we will work with event organisers to spread louder events across the District using the range of locations we have available. This will limit noise disturbance to the residents most closely located to Beacon Park, namely those in Beacon Park Village.



**Other Parks:**

Other parks and open spaces are also available for events – the Events officer will direct events to the most appropriate venue in terms of scale and type.

Other parks and open spaces that form part of our event portfolio include:

- **Stowe Fields** – benefitting from the same access to the City Centre as Beacon Park, Stowe offers an alternative venue for smaller events.



- |  |  |
|--|--|
|  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <b>Christchurch Playing Fields</b> – a large open space adjacent to Beacon Park. Offers an alternative venue for large scale events, particularly where there is a need to manage the impact on neighbours (music events etc.)</li><li>• <b>Darnford Park</b> and <b>Stychbrook Park</b> – are on the periphery of the city centre and offer hosting options for smaller events.</li><li>• <b>Burntwood Park</b> – an event space for medium sized events and community activities local to Burntwood Town Centre.</li></ul> |
|--|--|

**[Maps for these locations in the style of the above Beacon Park map have been commissioned and will be included in the published version].**

This page is intentionally left blank

# CORPORATE PEER CHALLENGE REPORT AND ACTION PLAN

Report of the Leader of the Council

Date:	8 March 2022
Agenda Item:	4
Contact Officer:	Christie Tims, Chief Operating Officer
Tel Number:	01543 753780
Email:	Christie.tims@lichfielddc.gov.uk
Key Decision?	<b>NO</b>
Local Ward Members	n/a



**CABINET**

## 1. Executive Summary

- 1.1 In November 2021 the Council invited a Corporate Peer team from the Local Government Association (LGA) to undertake a peer challenge. The last peer challenge was undertaken in 2014.

## 2. Recommendations

- 2.1 That Cabinet accept the recommendations provided in the Corporate Peer Challenge Report as set out in **Appendix 1**.
- 2.2 That Cabinet approves the action plan developed to respond to the recommendations in **Appendix 2** and will review this action plan after 6 months.

## 3. Background

- 3.1 A Corporate Peer Challenge is a voluntary process commissioned by a council to aid their improvement and learning. It involves a small team of local government peers spending time in another council to provide challenge and share learning to aid future improvement.
- 3.2 The process involves engaging with a wide range of people connected with the council and the findings are delivered via a report and recommendations that the Council must respond to. The production and publication of the report has been delayed as a result of Covid -19 in December/January.
- 3.3 The peer challenge process reviews five core components providing a high level, external 'health-check' centred upon understanding of local context and priority setting, financial planning and viability, political and managerial leadership, governance and decision making and organisational capacity
- 3.4 During the three-day challenge, the team spoke to more than 70 people including a range of council staff, members, external partners and stakeholders and gathered information and views from more than 40 virtual meetings. The final report from the LGA is attached at **Appendix 1**. The overall opinion is very positive about how the Council performs across the subject areas.
- 3.5 As with all challenges, areas for improvement are identified. Nine key recommendations were made by the team and these are summarised within page two of the final report. An internal action plan comprising these recommendations with associated action points can be found in **Appendix 2**. It is proposed the delivery of the action plan is monitored via the Being a Better Council Programme and formally reviewed after six months with support from the LGA to ensure actions are delivered effectively.

Alternative Options	1. A Corporate Peer Challenge is a voluntary exercise offered to local councils every 4 or 5 years to provide advice. Once undertaken a council must commit to publicise the report and develop an action plan in response to the recommendations.
Consultation	1. The action plan has been developed in conjunction with key officers, Cabinet and a briefing session to members on 1 March.
Financial Implications	1. None specifically from this report and action plan.
Approved by Section 151 Officer	Yes
Legal Implications	1. None specifically from this report and action plan.
Approved by Monitoring Officer	Yes
Contribution to the Delivery of the Strategic Plan	1. This action plan will ensure the outcomes from the Strategic plan are clear and deliverable.
Equality, Diversity and Human Rights Implications	1. Not relevant to this report.
Crime & Safety Issues	1. Not relevant to this report.
Environmental Impact	1. None relevant to this report.
GDPR / Privacy Impact Assessment	1. None relevant to this report.

	Risk Description & Risk Owner	Original Score (RYG)	How We Manage It	Current Score (RYG)
A	That the Corporate Peer Challenge report is not published	Yellow Likelihood Yellow and Impact Assessment Yellow	This report mitigates that risk. The report will also be available via the Council Website.	Green Likelihood Green and Impact Assessment Green
B	The council does not accept or progress the recommendations from the report	Yellow Likelihood Yellow and Impact Assessment Yellow	This report and action plan mitigates that risk. The plan will be monitored by the Better performing project and a formal update will be programmed for 6 months following the review.	Green Likelihood Green and Impact Assessment Green

	<b>Background documents</b>
--	-----------------------------

	Corporate Peer Challenge 2014
--	-------------------------------

	<b>Relevant web links</b>
--	---------------------------

	<a href="#">Peer challenges we offer   Local Government Association</a>
--	---

This page is intentionally left blank


# LGA Corporate Peer Challenge

Lichfield District Council

22<sup>nd</sup> – 24<sup>th</sup> November 2021

Feedback report





1. Executive summary.....	3
2. Key recommendations .....	5
3. Summary of the peer challenge approach .....	6
4. Feedback .....	8
5. Next steps.....	21




## 1. Executive summary

Lichfield District Council (LDC) had its previous corporate peer challenge (CPC) in 2014. There has been considerable change and challenge across the sector since this period, including the Covid-19 pandemic, and the organisation itself has had some significant changes including a new Leader and Cabinet following the elections in 2019, and a new Chief Executive who started in July 2021. This CPC has been commissioned now to support the council in the next stage of its journey.

The council is well run, and the peer team spoke to committed and passionate Members and officers across the organisation. This was also evidenced by partners and local stakeholders who spoke of good working relations and that the leadership of the council, spearheaded by the Leader and the new CEX, are working well to continue to move the organisation forward and are increasingly visible across the district.

It was clear that LDC is now in a period of transition. The most recent focus of the council had been on managing budgets and controlling costs, and it has done this very successfully. Previously, the council had consciously considered its position locally and concluded “where we can make little or marginal impact (and others are better placed to deliver) then we must take a step back – we need to be prudent in the way we support effective partnership working and mindful of the pressures and calls we place on our stakeholders” Economic Development Strategy 2016 – 2020, p2. As a consequence, LDC had pulled back from some of its place leadership role. However, with new leadership, “the council is in transition from an inward to outward looking organisation” (key partner during peer review). The timing of this peer review alongside the recent development of the Being A Better Council transformation programme is a clear positive step in this direction. Stakeholders the peer team met spoke highly of the council and shared a common view that it has legitimacy as place leader and would support LDC in positioning itself more squarely into this role.

However, clarity of the shared vision, strategic priorities, and alignment with the



internal transformation and the Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP) will be essential to realising the ambitions for the place and putting LDC at the heart of the place shaping agenda. The council will need to ensure that it remains focused on the delivery of these elements.

LDC should also have the confidence to use its finances to support the delivery of its priorities. In order to deliver the organisation's priorities, resourcing of these is absolutely essential and the peer team recommend that the council give some further consideration of how to effectively do this. For example, LDC has developed reserves through the effective management of its budget and as it now embarks on a significant transformation programme designed to deliver long term savings, the council may need to draw on those reserves to implement this strategy. The council may also want to consider the use of reserves in supporting organisational development within the transformation programme and also how deploying the reserves might play a part in LDC's wider investment strategy.

The peer team saw and heard how the organisation is clearly energised by the transformation programme. This is the council's principal means of reducing the operating costs of the organisation and is the single biggest programme it is embarking upon. The programme will therefore need sufficient resource and capacity to deliver, requiring upfront investment. This delivery of the programme is critical in terms of meeting the financial gap and providing a balanced budget over the medium term, with any non-delivery or under-delivery carrying significant risk.

Externally, there are two key infrastructure priorities for the council – the Birmingham Road Site and the leisure centre offer. The peer team heard this clearly from those we spoke to during the review, from the Leadership Team down to all levels of the council. It will be important for LDC to continue to make progress in delivering these and collective clarity on what and how these are to be delivered is critical to avoid misunderstanding and to maintain momentum.

## 2. Key recommendations

There are a number of observations and suggestions within the main section of the report. The following are the peer team's key recommendations to the council:

### 2.1. Recommendation 1

Develop clear outcomes for the strategic plan for the remainder of the plan's period. Identify resources and processes with programme management arrangements to produce a golden thread from the strategic intent to the delivery plans.

### 2.2. Recommendation 2

Invest time in setting out the decision making process for major priorities, including good project management disciplines e.g. project gateways, and being a better client.

### 2.3. Recommendation 3

Embrace the council's role as leader and convenor of place: For example, understanding how the Integrated Care System requirement to support broader social and economic development could be leveraged for the benefit of LDC's residents; or engaging with a wide range of partners in developing the Active Living Strategy to identify opportunities to join up around key outcomes.

### 2.4. Recommendation 4

Consider whether LDC has sufficient capacity in place for the Being A Better Council programme to proceed with the scale and pace set out.

### 2.5. Recommendation 5

Members to consider how their frontline role might evolve to enable a full contribution to and effective oversight of the four outcomes of the Being A Better Council programme, and consider appropriate support/development e.g. data and evidence led policy making, community leadership/engagement, commercial focus.

## **2.6. Recommendation 6**

Acknowledge the current uncertainty of how the new hybrid working model will operate and take steps to empower managers to work with their teams and experiment/test out how the model will work best for them and their customers.

## **2.7. Recommendation 7**

Review the LDC Communications and Engagement Strategy. As part of this, undertake a full stakeholder analysis and determine the appropriate mechanism to communicate progress of the council's key priorities both to partners and residents.

## **2.8. Recommendation 8**

Set realistic expectations around the timescales for delivery of the Birmingham Road Site and develop and deliver a communications/engagement strategy for the next 12 months targeted at local residents and other key stakeholders.

## **2.9. Recommendation 9**

Recognise, support and protect your tourism and economic offers – ensure the new Economic Development Strategy encapsulates this.

# **3. Summary of the peer challenge approach**

## **3.1. The peer team**

Peer challenges are delivered by experienced elected member and officer peers. The make-up of the peer team reflected the focus of the peer challenge and peers were selected on the basis of their relevant expertise. The peers were:

- Karime Hassan (CEX and Growth Director) Exeter City Council
- Cllr Simon Bound (Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Communities, Planning and Infrastructure) Basingstoke and Deane BC

- Karen Edwards (Executive Director) Rushmoor BC
- Caroline Ryba (Head of Finance and s151) Cambridge City Council
- Bridget Huggins (NGDP Management Trainee, CEX's Office) Southend-on-Sea BC
- James Millington (Peer Challenge Manager) LGA


### 3.2. Scope and focus

The peer team considered the following five themes which form the core components of all Corporate Peer Challenges. These areas are critical to councils' performance and improvement.

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?
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 challenge and scrutiny?
4. **Financial planning and management** - Does the council have a grip on its current financial position? Does the council have a strategy and a 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?

### 3.3. The peer challenge process

Peer challenges are improvement focused; it is important to stress that this was not an inspection. The process is not designed to provide an in-depth or technical assessment of plans and proposals. The peer team used their experience and knowledge of local government to reflect on the information presented to them by people they met, things they saw and material that they read.



The peer team prepared by reviewing a range of documents and information in order to ensure they were familiar with the council and the challenges it is facing. The team then spent two and a half days onsite and virtually at Lichfield DC, during which they:

- Gathered information and views from more than 30 meetings onsite and virtually, in addition to further research and reading.
- Spoke to more than 80 people including a range of council staff together with members and external stakeholders.


This report provides a summary of the peer team's findings. In presenting feedback, they have done so as fellow local government officers and members.

## 4. Feedback

### 4.1. Local priorities and outcomes

LDC's current Strategic Plan covering 2020-24 has 4 strands: Enable People, Shape Place, Develop Prosperity, and Be A Good Council. This Plan was developed through consultation with Members, staff, residents and stakeholders. Similarly, LDC undertakes consultation with residents as part of the budget setting process. These approaches towards engagement are a strength of the organisation.

The Covid-19 pandemic has impacted delivery of the Strategic Plan, but LDC continues to monitor its delivery and develop mitigation plans where needed. In responding to the impact of Covid-19 the council developed an overall Coronavirus Recovery Plan. The peer team heard how the council has responded well to the needs of its communities during the crisis with support to residents and its response to businesses, for example through its 'excellent' distribution of business grants. Partners highlighted that the council has been particularly strong and visible in its




response across the district during the recent Covid-19 period. Staff have also appreciated seeing the Leadership Team ‘rolling up their sleeves and standing alongside officers’ in delivering a whole council approach to supporting communities during the pandemic.

Within the council the peer team saw clarity on its short term priorities for the Birmingham Road Site and the leisure centre offer. The peer team heard a great deal about these two areas of focus during our discussions and there was also evidence of LDC staff understanding the ambitions for the district on its key services including waste, parks and tourism.

However, the peer team heard there was no single view of the council’s vision shared across the organisation or by partners and communities. There were elements which were similar in the descriptions offered - but the peer team felt that there was a lack of clear golden thread connecting the vision for place, manifesto/political priorities, corporate strategy and service/delivery plans. It would be beneficial for Members and officers for the council to revisit and be clear on the outcomes for the Strategic Plan for the remainder of the Plan’s period and inter-dependencies with other plans, including the Being A Better Council programme.

Aligned to this is providing clarity on the role of partners in delivering the council’s outcomes and priorities for place. This will be helpful in identifying the partners LDC need to work with to deliver those outcomes. The peer team heard from LDC’s partners how the council has started recently to reach out to them more actively. They appreciate this and would welcome being more clearly sighted on how they can work alongside the council to deliver for the district. Partners we spoke to felt that LDC has a legitimate role as leader of place and were keen to join with them to be part of this cross-organisational approach.

Through its Strategic Plan the council has ambitions to support the positive health and wellbeing outcomes of its communities. However, more clearly stating the health




and leisure priorities for the place would be of benefit as the peer team felt there was a lack of clarity on how the council addresses community health outcomes. The development of the Active Living Strategy will be important and could assist with finalising the approach to the new leisure centre too. This Strategy should help shape this approach - not just about what happens within a physical building but within the community. The leisure centre is a priority, but the peer team felt that the approach may benefit from being articulated differently and separated from being a conversation on what has been put in the budget to a conversation about delivering health outcomes alongside partners. How the council's investment in a capital project delivers health and wellbeing outcomes is an important narrative in terms of place shaping.

The Leadership Team are clear about the priorities that matter in terms of public confidence, and how this is impacting satisfaction with LDC. The council utilise resident perception surveys to measure and monitor this and recognise the importance of this. The reduction in satisfaction in the most recent survey could be explained by the under delivery on the major projects and the Leadership have stated their intention to focus on the delivery of these.

There are opportunities for the council to better engage on major projects/service changes with their communities and communicate the rationale more clearly. How projects are communicated and the narrative behind them is critical and the peer team heard from residents and partners that this is not always consistently done well by LDC. For instance, the peer team heard that the recent introduction of residents' bags for waste might have been handled differently to avoid misunderstanding - by developing a narrative and engaging residents in the debate and rationale for this change, and others like it, means they can better understand the choices the council is making even if they do not like the solution. Storytelling of rationale and decision making is important, and the council could strengthen its approach to this.

The council could be clearer and more visible on its use of performance information and how it uses data and insight. There is work in progress on this and the project






with Social Progress Imperative may help by getting more finer grain data for how the organisation views its priorities and outcomes and the information needed to shape responses. The LGA's [LGIinform](#) with its data and benchmarking capability will also complement this and is a helpful tool for the council to maximise all available information, from ward to district level.

LDC declared a Climate Emergency in December 2019. The peer team felt that there were opportunities for the council to be clearer on how it is responding to the climate change priority and the net zero agenda and the council's important role for instance in regeneration, electric vehicle charging and opportunities in green procurement for LDC. A coherent message on LDC's approach to addressing these issues by highlighting what it is already doing and planning to do, and where appropriate intentionally linking these with regeneration opportunities and service requirements, would benefit from being more clearly captured and articulated by the council.

#### **4.2. Organisational and place leadership**

The peer team heard from within the organisation and from partners how the Leader and the new CEX are positive catalysts for change for the council and the district. There were lots of positive comments by partners praising their approach and how they are seen as being increasingly visible across the district by 'getting out' and meeting with partners virtually or in person. The wider Leadership Team is also considered as being increasingly effective and this was particularly demonstrated through the Covid-19 pandemic response and recovery work where LDC continues to fulfil a critical role for its communities.

Partners described good examples of relationships with LDC for example with the community and voluntary sector, Bromford Housing and the Chamber of Commerce. Positive feedback from partners referenced the relations with particular colleagues at LDC and also the positive culture of the organisation as being one 'to do business




with'. Similarly, across the tiers of local government at a political and officer level partners at Staffordshire County Council, Burntwood Town Council, and neighbouring authorities, spoke highly of LDC. Indeed, there may be further opportunities through the development of local hubs etc to work increasingly closer with the County Council, in addition to closer working with the neighbouring districts.

Relationships are clearly important to the council and its renewed focus on them provides opportunities to deliver increasingly positive outcomes for its communities. This has also included combining funding with partners such as the community and voluntary sector to collectively deliver priorities. For instance, LDC supported the community lottery and in the first year is on course to generate £50k. This is a relatively small scale project but the concept of funding to deliver for the community is really positive.

However, the place shaping role of LDC is currently seen by partners as underdeveloped, due to a lack of co-ordinated conversations across the district. LDC could capitalise on the good relations it has to help bring partners together to better identify the district's barriers to achieving the ambitions for place and together utilise the capacity and capabilities of partners to address them. Partners the peer team spoke to are keen to further discuss how to do this with the council.

The council has developed momentum on the new internal transformation programme and there is a sense of energy across the organisation. There do remain some key questions about how this will be rolled out, including the impact on staffing and resources. This creates uncertainty for staff and the council will want to move quickly to develop the programme further and provide further detail.

There are important decisions to be made about the future capacity and skills needs of LDC required to deliver the council's Strategic Plan. This could be addressed through the Being A Better Council strategy. Sufficiently resourcing the delivery of the programme to produce the outcomes the council needs in the desired timeframe



is an area for the council to consider further.

LDC's Management Development Programme is viewed positively, providing networking and service improvement opportunities. Middle managers spoke positively about the programme and suggested that there are further opportunities to create space for LDC managers to come together to problem solve, identify cross-council learning and produce better outcomes. It was clear from the peer team's discussions that LDC managers value working together but this is done largely informally currently. There appears to be good camaraderie between officers and there is the potential for something more formal to be established, perhaps through the transformation programme, to support the council's desire to increase collaboration and horizontal working.

The district is relatively small and therefore one or two projects can have a major impact on the place. There are two key projects which, at the time of the challenge, dominate and shape perceptions about the council: the Birmingham Road Site project and the leisure centre project. LDC is addressing the issues around project management capacity, including capturing the client requirements and decision making but agreement on the strategic intent and clear articulation of all the desired strategic outcomes from the project would be beneficial.

Good work on the council's day-to-day services can also be masked by slower delivery of major priorities. LDC recognises that improvements to its approach to communications and engagement can be made, building on its practice around the Strategic Plan and budget engagement, to better engage communities in what it is doing and understanding how to get the council's messages more consistently to a wide range of stakeholders. The approach to LDC communications and engagement could be strengthened through a review of the current strategy to consider the most effective communications channels for LDC. The LGA would be pleased to provide some support to the council to do this.

### 4.3. Governance and culture


There is a positive culture between Members and officers at LDC. The Leader and new CEX have quickly established a good working relationship and feedback from internal and external colleagues is positive about what they are delivering together for the council. The peer team also observed good relations between the council's senior Members and officers.

A shared vision with strategic priorities is important for the council, with clear and consistent decision making by the Cabinet. The peer team heard about instances where this collective vision is not consistently articulated and that there would be benefit in giving this some attention. Clarity here will then support officers to develop options for Cabinet and Council approval.

The peer team observed open and honest dialogue at the new Managers Forum with the CEX and Leadership Team, and this is a sound foundation which can be built on and it will be important for the Team to set aside time to maintain the current focus and momentum around change. There are good relations in place, including with the unions, and there is now also an opportunity to engage them more fully. This is especially important in the context of making the transformation programme a success, as LDC are starting from a position with positive relations in place.

The council has committed to opening-up governance and being transparent through publishing council reports and papers, and virtual log-ins to meetings from members of the public has been high. This approach has been driven by the Leadership of the council and has been accelerated through the virtual arrangements quickly adopted at the start of the Covid-19 pandemic. LDC are keen to do more of this as part of its approach to ensure that people are aware of what it is doing and why.

To support the delivery of the Strategic Plan LDC adopted a set of Values for its staff to: Put customers first; Improve and innovate; and Have respect for everyone. These are understood by staff and provide fertile ground for innovation. For example, LDC




is rightly proud of its innovative approach to biodiversity and developed its own 'Lichfield Model', so major developments within the district achieve or exceed the habitat replacement requirements. Having values that live and breathe within the organisation are important to the culture of the organisation.

The council recently reviewed its arrangements for scrutiny and now has a single Overview and Scrutiny Committee in place. These new scrutiny arrangements are being embedded and this change still needs time to see how it works in practice. The peer team recommend that this is kept under review to ensure scrutiny is as effective as it should be for the council.

Staff noted how internal communications has improved recently with the new CEX seen as making a big difference to this with frequent blogs and communications to staff. It is important that this can be developed further and communications and engagement with staff extended beyond that which comes from the CEX, perhaps as part of a menu of different internal communications.

The council has created a Panel with front line members to support the delivery of the Birmingham Road Site project. LDC is keen to involve and engage Members in this as part of the project and the peer team see this involvement as very positive in order to ensure Member involvement in shaping this key priority for LDC.

Within the transformation, there is an opportunity for LDC to consider how the council can support all of its councillors with their future training/support needs. For example, when thinking about Members' needs as place leaders in communities the council will want to consider the support they may need or desire in their role as champions of place and for the district more widely. The new Monitoring Officer will hold the lead on member development, both individual and collective needs. Member support and development can be provided internally and also utilise external support through the LGA's national and bespoke support to develop a tailored comprehensive Member Development Programme for LDC.



As part of LDCs approach to addressing issues around Equalities, Diversity and Inclusion the council publishes an annual Equality Statement. This collects data on the demographics of the borough, and how the council's equality priorities respond to the needs of the community. This has included training and development for Members and officers; equality impact assessments on the impact of service changes; and adjustments to internal policies to support the council's workforce. LDC appears to have better embedded equalities in people focused services (for instance in customer services and housing) but there remains further work to do across the organisation and the peer team would encourage LDC to remain focused on this agenda.

LDC is reviewing the People Strategy to ensure it remains fit for purpose. Within this the new Belonging Strategy will need to be sufficiently resourced and include outcomes co-designed with staff to ensure the culture and behavioural shifts to support both hybrid working and transformation are achieved across LDC. Recognising financial challenges and other priorities the peer team recommend that the council do not understate the investment in time from staff and managers required for the effective development and ongoing implementation of the Strategy and recognise the value this investment in the co-design process as an early demonstration of the culture shift.

Some LDC staff the peer team spoke to expressed a lack of understanding about the rationale for bringing in external contractors as opposed to utilising internal resources. This can leave staff feeling undervalued if they believe that their skills and capability is not being recognised. The council will want to consider how to ensure that the rationale for bringing in external resource is clearly set out and the value this brings to the council and the capability of the workforce as a whole.

#### 4.4. Financial planning and management


The peer team saw strong financial management at the council, meaning it has accurate budget figures which it is able to rely on. The council has a clean audit opinion and the external auditor also considers the council to have strong financial management. The auditor's view is that: LDC has a robust financial position; the council's Audit Committee is knowledgeable and well engaged and the Finance Team are strong and well led.

It appears that LDC has previously planned for worse case funding scenarios. Therefore, the focus has been on cost reduction, which was within council control rather than relying on income generation or a more explicit commercial approach. In the past this has delivered balanced budgets and the prudent financial approach has also led to the good level of reserves.

The council has recently successfully implemented new a finance system (Civica), which aims to allow users to access information to manage budgets. The peer team heard how this appears to be going well and will give budget holders access to their budgets and the information they need to manage their budgets more closely, and possibly requiring less support from the Finance Team to provide figures on spend and profiles.

LDC has outlined its funding gap for the coming years of £1.3m in 2022/23 rising to £2.1m by 2025/26. However, the council recognises that this may be as high as £1.8m by 2022/23 and £2.7m by 2025/26, with the identification of new pressures and the level of uncertainty in future years. Through the recent financial settlement the council's core spending power has increased by 5.2% or £563k.

The Being A Better Council programme is critical to meeting the council's financial challenge as it is the means of addressing the financial gap and providing a balanced budget over the medium term. However, the detail behind the savings has not yet been outlined and the council will now want to develop the programme at pace. This



late planning means that meeting the budget gap in 2022/23 presents a risk, and at this stage it is unlikely to deliver full year savings on any savings which come forward. As part of this financial approach LDC will want to consider any proactive use of reserves to bridge the timing gap between confirmation of the programme detail and savings being realised. However, this should not detract from the importance of delivering the savings identified.

The council has a wealth of financial data and there is no shortage of financial information available. Financial reports are comprehensive and very detailed, but the council may want to review their format to ensure they are tailored and targeted to the intended audience, which will aid understanding of risks and mitigating actions which may need to be taken.

The peer team found little evidence of how the council's financial strategy supports the ambitions for the district and the council's priorities and how the reasonably strong financial position and access to borrowing, and other financial levers can support these priorities. Within its approach to financial management, LDC will want to consider how financial levers and flexibilities can support the delivery of the council's ambitions, such as in the new Economic Development Strategy.

Corporate Risk is given a high profile by the council. The peer team saw how risk management within the council appears strong, with risks brought forward as part of committee papers. However, there is no single view of this across the organisation as it is held in various systems, currently using excel, word and Pentana, to monitor risk. This will be beneficial to address through the plans in the Being a Better Council programme and provide a holistic view across the organisation.




#### 4.5. Capacity for improvement

The Leadership Team have recognised the need for the council to change to meet the future financial and service delivery challenges. This has been articulated publicly and strongly in the transformation programme.

The Programme represents an opportunity for improvement across the council and the peer team found that staff are willing to go on this journey. However, staff are currently unclear on the detail of how the Building a Better Council programme will work and the peer team would encourage LDC to draw this out in a clear way as part of the programme development. Alongside this, staff need clarity on future working arrangements in relation to the council's future direction regarding a return to offices and agile working. The peer team heard there was an expectation from staff that they would be told how agile working would work – but as this is not the intention of the transformation programme, managers should work with their teams to develop this in the light of specific service delivery arrangements and customers.

The council recognises the significant effort and resources required to deliver the transformation programme by Senior Officers – and there are short term arrangements in place, but it is currently unclear how long term capacity needs will be met. Developing a better understanding of the impact of delivering transformation along with business as usual for all staff, given areas of existing pressure will be important. It is not yet clear how this is going to be sustained in the longer term and the peer team would encourage this to be explored further.

Appointing a Senior Officer, as Chief Operating Officer, who has a key role to drive the Being a Better Council programme is crucial and will be important to its success. This also allows the CEX to focus on building the external facing partnership arrangement opportunities and develop the place leadership role of the council by supporting the Leader, Cabinet and other Members.



The council's financial reserves provide a good opportunity for budgeting for improvement. LDC may have to make some choices and establish some principles for this, for balancing a budget now versus planning to balance over the medium term. The council will want to consider how to utilise its financial position to deliver what it sets out to do.

As part of its delivery for both internal and external facing services LDC already has some shared service arrangements in place with other councils for example with South Staffordshire District Council (legal) and Tamworth Borough Council (waste). This approach supports delivery and offers some resilience to the council in meeting service delivery challenges. The council may wish to review this and further explore other shared service opportunities as part of its future model.

The peer team heard about the council's Management Development Programme and how staff have found this opportunity helpful. This will complement the transformation programme but LDC may want to refine this further in time. Managers have received a good grounding through the development programme but the level of support for personal development will need greater consideration as ongoing support will be needed for all staff as part of the transformation programme. For example, for the Belonging Strategy it will be important to be clear on the expectations of the role of a manager at LDC, how they behave, how they lead and are empowered.

Leadership development for all Members should be considered for an improved understanding of the wider role of the council as it moves forward. The future role of the council is changing so Members, as well as officers, will need to be provided with tools and development opportunities and this should be planned through the forthcoming Member Development Programme.



## 5. Next steps

It is recognised that senior political and managerial leadership will want to consider, discuss and reflect on these findings.

Both the peer team and LGA are keen to build on the relationships formed through the peer challenge. The CPC process includes a six-month check-in 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.

In the meantime, Helen Murray, Principal Adviser for the West Midlands, is the main contact between your authority and the LGA. Helen is available to discuss any further support the council requires [Helen.murray@local.gov.uk](mailto:Helen.murray@local.gov.uk).

This page is intentionally left blank

**LGA Corporate Peer Challenge Action Plan - 2022**

No.	Recommendation	Response	Action	Lead	Target date	Progress (RAG)
1	Develop clear outcomes for the strategic plan for the remainder of the plan's period.  Identify resources and processes with programme management arrangements to produce a golden thread from the strategic intent to the delivery plans	Re-establish delivery plan targets	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Review the delivery plan targets and refine by setting meaningful goals, milestones and timescales</li> </ul>	CT	April 2022	G
		Apply programme management approach to delivery plan outcomes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Establish all delivery plan projects in an effective corporate programme</li> </ul>	KS	May 2022	G
			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Link key data sets and outcomes</li> </ul>	KS	May 2022	G
2	Invest time in setting out the decision-making process for major priorities, including good project management disciplines e.g. project gateways, and being a better client.	Apply programme management approach to delivery plan outcomes.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Establish a framework for effective corporate programme management.</li> </ul>	KS	March 2022	G
			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Imbed skills in the organisation to provide project and programme management.</li> </ul>	CT	Sept 2022	G
3	Embrace the council's role as leader and convenor of place: For example, understanding how the Integrated Care System requirement to support broader social and economic development could be leveraged for the benefit of LDC's residents; or engaging with a wide range of partners in developing the Active Living Strategy to identify opportunities to join up around key outcomes.	Identify needs through effective use of data and work collaboratively to deliver outcomes.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Use data to drive decision making and support district wide improvement.</li> </ul>	TT	Jun 2022	G
		Identify partnership opportunities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Develop District Strategic Plan to 2050 to pull together key ambitions.</li> </ul>	SF	Jan 2023	G
			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Roll out Community Power Strategy.</li> </ul>	CT	Dec 2022	G

No.	Recommendation	Response	Action	Lead	Target date	Progress (RAG)
4	Consider whether LDC has sufficient capacity in place for the Being A Better Council, programme to proceed with the scale and pace set out.	Apply programme management approach to ensure outcomes are realised	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Introduce dedicated programme management, leadership and business analyst support to the programme</li> </ul>	SF	Nov 2021	G
			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Create pool of 'change champions' to support communications up and down the org.</li> </ul>	SF	Nov 2021	G
			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Identified resources and set up project and programme.</li> </ul>	SF	Dec 21	G
5	Members to consider how their frontline role might evolve to enable a full contribution to and effective oversight of the four outcomes of the Being A Better Council programme, and consider appropriate support/development e.g. data and evidence led policy making, community leadership/engagement, commercial focus	Develop members understanding of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Resident and Business centric</li> <li>Data</li> <li>Performance driven</li> <li>Commercially minded</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Review member training offer to support BABC</li> </ul>	CT	May 2022	G
			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Deliver updated structured training offer based around BABC</li> </ul>	CT	Jul 2022	G
6	Acknowledge the current uncertainty of how the new hybrid working model will operate and take steps to empower managers to work with their teams and experiment/test out how the model will work best for them and their customers.	Significant movement on this since November 2022 – teams now working in hybrid model following ceasing restriction 26.1.22	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Deliver BABC – better led and better performing projects</li> </ul>	ALL	Sept 2022	G
			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Collaboration tools</li> <li>Belonging &amp; Wellbeing Strategy launched; Building use policy implemented; Intranet pages updated, FAQ's developed.</li> </ul>	CT	Feb 2022	G

No.	Recommendation	Response	Action	Lead	Target date	Progress (RAG)
7	Review the LDC Communications and Engagement Strategy. As part of this, undertake a full stakeholder analysis and determine the appropriate mechanism to communicate progress of the council's key priorities both to partners and residents	Embrace community power model Mapping voluntary sector and using data	• Launch new Community Power Strategy	CT	April 2022	G
			• Deliver Community Power Strategy and develop full stakeholder engagement	CT	Sept 2022	G
			• Restructure communications team	SF	March 2022	G
8	Set realistic expectations around the timescales for delivery of the Birmingham Road Site and develop and deliver a communications/ engagement strategy for the next 12 months targeted at local residents and other key stakeholders	Multi phased approach established to development  Milestones now established	• Establish all delivery plan projects in an effective corporate programme	DM	March 2022	G
			• Develop and agree Masterplan	DM	May 2022	G
			• Deliver communications /engagement plan	DM	Dec 2022	G
9	Recognise, support and protect your tourism and economic offers – ensure the new Economic Development Strategy encapsulates this.	Include consideration of social value.	• Develop Economic Prosperity Strategy	DM	Jun 2022	G
			• Procurement Strategy to develop clear social value ambitions to support	AT	May 2022	G

This page is intentionally left blank



# COMMUNITY POWER STRATEGY

Report of Councillor Richard Cox, Cabinet Member for Community Engagement

Date:	8 March 2022
Agenda Item:	5
Contact Officer:	Christie Tims, Chief Operating Officer
Tel Number:	01543 753780
Email:	Christie.tims@lichfielddc.gov.uk
Key Decision?	<b>NO</b>
Local Ward Members	n/a



**CABINET**

## 1. Executive Summary

- 1.1 In July 2020 Cabinet approved an engagement strategy which focused on communities rather than customers, moving them from transactional communication methods to being more co-creative, and so by inference, fully engaged.
- 1.2 This report sets out our aspiration to go beyond the remit of the original strategy and adopting a community power approach to engaging communities in local decisions and working with them to improve outcomes.

## 2. Recommendations

- 2.1 That Cabinet approves the Community Power Strategy as set out in **Appendix 1**.

## 3. Background

- 3.1 Community power captures a wide range of different practices, approaches and initiatives based on the principle that communities have knowledge, skills and assets which mean they themselves are well placed to identify and respond to any challenges that they face, and to thrive.
- 3.2 New methods of enabling community insights to shape action are increasingly being developed from councils trialling participatory and deliberative democracy, moving beyond engagement to co-production, including:
  - Community decision-making: Using deliberative and participatory tools to involve citizens more meaningfully in local decision-making.
  - Collaboration with communities: Public services shifting from hierarchical and siloed ways of working, to more collaborative approaches which deeply involve communities as equal partners with essential insights.
  - Building community capacity and assets: Equipping communities with the resources and skills they need to mobilise and genuinely participate in local action
- 3.3 The Community Power Strategy sets out our high-level approach and ambition to develop effective models for Lichfield District, building on best practice and accelerating our pace of change in #Beingabettercouncil

### Alternative Options

The council choose not to have a community power and remain with the previous engagement strategy. However this approach is felt to be a key concept in developing our #Beingabettercouncil approach and new Target Operating Model.

Consultation	This strategy has been developed with support from New Local.
Financial Implications	None specifically from this report and strategy. Delivery of key aspects of this plan are linked to the #Beingabettercouncil programme and development stages will be funded from existing resources or as part of our new Target Operating Model.
Approved by Section 151 Officer	Yes
Legal Implications	1. Legal advice will be sought at relevant stages to determine governance arrangements for local decision making and realisation of community power.
Approved by Monitoring Officer	Yes
Contribution to the Delivery of the Strategic Plan	1. This strategy underpins delivery of the strategic plan in enabling people to help themselves and each other.
Equality, Diversity and Human Rights Implications	1. Not relevant to this report.
Crime & Safety Issues	1. Not relevant to this report.
Environmental Impact	1. None relevant to this report.
GDPR / Privacy Impact Assessment	1. None relevant to this report.

	Risk Description & Risk Owner	Original Score (RYG)	How We Manage It	Current Score (RYG)
A	That the community power models divert resources from other key areas of work and outcomes	Yellow Likelihood Yellow and Impact Assessment Yellow	Engagement with communities is central to the development of the organisation, this strategy will be a key consideration in the development of the Target Operating Model to provide resources.	Green Likelihood Green and Impact Assessment Green
B	The community power models lead to diluted resources and conflicts with confusion regarding roles and responsibilities	Yellow Likelihood Yellow and Impact Assessment Yellow	Structures discussed in this strategy are to be supported by effective governance models and processes.	Green Likelihood Green and Impact Assessment Green

	<b>Background documents</b> <a href="https://lichfielddc.gov.uk">Report template for O&amp;S Cabinet and Full Council (lichfielddc.gov.uk)</a>
--	---

	<b>Relevant web links</b> <a href="#">Community Power in Practice - New Local</a>
--	--



# Community Power Strategy



## Foreword

### **Councillor Richard Cox, Cabinet Member for Community Engagement**

Our thinking about community engagement has moved on since we published the first iteration of our engagement strategy in June 2020, influenced by New Local and their powerful project about putting community power into practice. New Local describes ‘community power’ as a belief that people should have a say over the places in which they live and the services they use. It describes a growing movement – with communities across the country, and the world, working together to improve places, public services, and each other’s lives.

This second iteration of our community engagement strategy is an attempt to rise to the community power challenge and genuinely put this transformational approach into practice with our communities across Lichfield District.



*It is the small, everyday deeds of ordinary folk that keep the darkness at bay. Small acts of kindness and love.*

J. R. R. Tolkien

## Context

Community power captures a wide range of different practices, approaches and initiatives. The basic premise is that communities have the knowledge, skills and assets which mean they themselves are well placed to identify and respond to challenges they face, and to thrive. The principle is not just theory, it already exists in neighbourhoods, in local networks, and in voluntary and community organisations where people come together to overcome challenges and support each other.

This power has come to life through the huge generosity, support and sharing we have witnessed during the Covid-19 pandemic. Individuals, groups and whole communities have risen to the challenge of protecting the vulnerable in their neighbourhoods and in doing so, done their part to protect the NHS.

We now recognise the benefits of actively collaborating with communities. This strategy is about just that, about enabling community insight to shape what we do, about understanding local community needs and empowering them further to be part of the solutions.

## Our Vision

We want to **understand, engage** and **involve our communities** in what we do. By improving how we engage with our communities we can deliver more collaborative and devolved activity at a local level – involving the communities best placed at identifying local issues and supporting them to deliver the solutions to these issues.

## Priorities

- Understand our communities and their needs
- Engage our communities in decisions that affect them
- Encourage everyone to have a voice and build trust
- Ensure we have the right skills and qualities in place to support communities to help themselves
- Work with local groups and organisations to improve the outcomes for our communities
- Create a shared vision for change at a local level



## Our objectives will be delivered through themes

Theme	Timescale	Activities	Outcomes
<b>People are considered active:</b> 'citizens', 'communities', 'participants'	March 2022	Determine a set of guiding principles to ensure transparency and clarity in the engagement process.	Transparency and understanding by all involved in the process.
<b>Reciprocal relationship:</b> 'what can we do together to make things better'	March 2022	To engage with local communities about what we measure and what's important to them.	Improved community and engagement by improved knowledge.
<b>Joined up working style:</b> shaped by a shared vision for change and horizontal connections	March 2022	Communications plan to advise ward councillors and local communities and community leaders of intentions.	Communities to become more connected, engaged and empowered
<b>Combining institutional and community expertise:</b> to gain diverse insights	July 2022	Utilise data and insight in order to understand our communities and their needs	Tailored and increased engagement and consultations opportunities based on the demography of the locality.
<b>Facilitative and collaborative partner:</b> with local groups and partners	July 2022	Work with Ward Councillors to understand localities and their requirements.	Locality based engagement.

Theme	Timescale	Activities	Outcomes
<b>Collaboration model which incentivises flexibility:</b> and a focus on improving community outcomes	September 2022	Locality commissioning protocols to determine services and organisations who can design and deliver services at a local level with our communities.	Clear and transparent commissioning of services and projects
<b>Deliberative engagement style:</b> ‘what do you want to do together?’	December 2022	Deploy officers locally to start to start engagement activity based on community designed and led action plans to enable local communities to identify and take forward their own initiatives and projects.	Greater project and service delivery at a local level.
<b>Distributed networks of leadership:</b> where everyone has a voice	December 2022	Create local steering groups. To place the final decision in the hands of the community. Groundwork for Area Management Committees	Community groups designed around community needs.
<b>Experimental learning culture:</b> emphasising trust and development	Ongoing	To work directly with the community throughout a process to ensure that concerns and aspirations are consistently understood and taken into consideration.	Plans being delivered that are community led.

## Success Measures

1. Residents feel empowered in their communities, and feel part of the solutions to local problems
2. Residents feel the council provides value for money
3. Residents are overall very or fairly satisfied with LDC
4. Fewer complaints received
5. Residents express trust in LDC
6. Residents feel fairly, or well informed about our services
7. Partners are overall very satisfied or satisfied with LDC

