



Westmorland  
& Furness  
Council

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# **Westmorland and Furness Council LGA Corporate Peer Challenge Action Plan**



# Introduction

Westmorland and Furness Council is approaching its third year as a new organisation. During this time, we have brought together four legacy councils and established a single, coherent authority. This has required significant effort, careful coordination and considerable adaptation from colleagues across the organisation. Through this work, a positive and collaborative culture has begun to take shape, and we are already seeing improvements in many of our services. The commitment shown by staff at all levels has ensured that the council has had a strong start.

As we look ahead, it is clear that the initial phase of establishing the new council is coming to an end. The foundations have been laid, and we now need to consider the next stage of our development: how we build on what has been achieved, how we strengthen our long-term direction, and how we organise ourselves to meet the challenges and opportunities of the coming years.

It was with this in mind that we invited the Local Government Association to undertake a Corporate Peer Challenge in July 2025. The aim was to secure an independent perspective on our progress so far and to understand, through a structured and evidence-based process, what further steps will support our future development. The peer team reviewed a wide range of documentation, including our self-assessment, and engaged with more than 150 staff, Members, partners, residents, trade unions and community groups. Their observations reflect a broad and balanced view of how the organisation is working.

We recognise and accept the findings and recommendations set out in their report. They provide a clear and helpful focus on the areas where we are performing well and those where further work is required. The report also reflects the wider context in which all councils are operating: increasing demand for services, significant financial pressures, and rising expectations from the communities we serve.

Taken together, the findings underline the importance of defining the council's longer-term organisational direction and ensuring we have the structures, capabilities and resources needed to deliver it sustainably. While some actions can be taken immediately, the report also points to the need for a more comprehensive, organisation-wide transformation process. This will require careful planning and engagement, but it will provide the clarity and stability needed for the council's next phase.

This action plan sets out the initial steps we will take in response to the peer challenge. Its primary purpose is to support the development of a three-year transformation plan that will guide the future shape and operation of the council, alongside this shorter-term improvement activity will be set out.

# Responding to the report recommendations

The peer challenge report includes 17 recommendations. In this action plan, related recommendations have been grouped together into themes. In some cases, distinct actions will address particular recommendations, in others broader programmes of activity will be undertaken to address multiple linked recommendations. These are summarised below. Progress against the action plan will be monitored through regular reporting to Corporate Management Team and Cabinet.

Theme	Recommendations
<b>Organisational mission, operating model and transformation</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Define a new, clear overarching milestone organisationally, post 'Safe and Legal'. Then wrap the organisation, ways of working and focus around it.</li> <li>2. Ensure the council has a clearer message on what it wants to achieve and by when, taking the opportunity to declutter and develop a three-year delivery plan, with clear milestones, signed-off by Cabinet.</li> <li>3. Refresh and then embed the Target Operating Model (TOM).</li> <li>4. Revisit and refresh the expectations of enabling services and what service areas could be and should be doing themselves.</li> <li>5. Further develop the council's approach to resident focus. Including a robust framework, a regular survey and the use of relevant forums.</li> <li>6. Map out the requirements for moving forward at the pace the council seeks with ICT and digital. Ensure CMT own the ICT/digital blueprint and milestones for the next two years and that leadership responsibilities are clear.</li> <li>7. Review the capital programme operating model to drive timely delivery.</li> </ol>
<b>Financial sustainability</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>8. Given the underlying financial pressure, potential liabilities and risks – look further at the opportunities for savings/efficiencies within the stabilisation and integration work and how to build up further resilience.</li> </ol>
<b>Culture and governance</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>9. Act on the known issues which are affecting the ability to provide effective corporate officer leadership across the wider SLT. Utilise suitable, specific external support. Empowering ADs as the organisation's engine with enhanced delegated powers and clearer decision journeys.</li> <li>10. Rebuild from the known relationship issues between some service areas and enabling services. Doing so in a way which helps to ensure a one council approach is taken and officers are supported to consistently work well across professional boundaries, as appropriate.</li> <li>11. Listen closely to the feedback from the staff survey and communicate how the council will respond to this and act on it. Do this to help the council to further develop the 'Together we are Westmorland and Furness' ambition. It may also help prevent further wellbeing issues.</li> <li>12. Streamline internal processes and governance to ensure the council's approach to decision making is proportionate and appropriate, focused on the pace of delivery sought in each instance. This includes the culture and risk appetite around different decisions.</li> <li>13. Ensure there is increased corporate grip on the use of internal audit given the low number of completed internal audit reports and the three significant weaknesses in the external auditor's report.</li> <li>14. Further develop Overview and Scrutiny using the feedback given throughout this report to inform those steps.</li> </ol>

Theme	Recommendations
Place priorities	<p>15. Move at pace to ensure the council has in place the right leadership, processes and capability to deliver on Team Barrow and the agility this requires.</p> <p>16. Further embrace, and prepare for at a political level, the opportunities of being on the Devolution Priority Programme (DPP) and how this can contribute to and help shape the future agenda for Westmorland and Furness.</p> <p>17. Put in place quickly, long term, monitored delivery plans to deliver the economic plan and the homes that Westmorland and Furness needs. Use place partners to help do this.</p>

## Recommendations and actions

### Theme 1: Organisational mission, operating model and transformation

Recommendations	CMT owner	Action
<p>1. Define a new, clear overarching milestone organisationally, post 'Safe and Legal'. Then wrap the organisation, ways of working and focus around it.</p> <p>2. Ensure the council has a clearer message on what it wants to achieve and by when, taking the opportunity to declutter and develop a three-year delivery plan, with clear milestones, signed-off by Cabinet.</p> <p>3. Refresh and then embed the Target Operating Model (TOM).</p> <p>4. Revisit and refresh the expectations of enabling services and what service areas could be and should be doing themselves.</p>	Assistant Chief Executive	<p>A new Annual Plan for 2026/27 is being developed to reflect the peer team's feedback and to set out the specific actions needed next year to deliver a balanced budget and start the next phase of organisational change.</p> <p>The Annual Plan will be agreed in March 2026, following the budget decision in February.</p> <p>By April 2026, we will have:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Set out a clear, council-wide transformation vision</li> <li>Updated the target operating model so it reflects that vision and the peer feedback</li> <li>Developed a practical three-year implementation plan that maps the major changes and milestones</li> </ul> <p>We will move from 'safe and legal' to 'transformation' The implementation plan will set out what needs to change now, what can be reformed over the medium term, and what will take longer to deliver. It will make clear how we will deal with immediate financial pressures while also progressing the wider redesign the council needs for the future.</p> <p>This work will occur in three phases between January and April 2026 and will be led by the incoming Chief Executive</p> <p><b>Milestones</b></p> <p><b>1. Mobilise and Understand (Jan–Feb)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Get leadership aligned and agree the scope of the work.</li> <li>Get a clear picture of our finances, pressures and current capabilities and benefits to be realised.</li> <li>Set the direction for what we want the council to look like in future and the main elements of the future operating model.</li> </ul>

Recommendations	CMT owner	Action
		<p><b>2. Validate and Approve (April)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Final checks, financial testing and impact assessments.</li> <li>Cabinet signs off the transformation programme, the priorities and the three-year roadmap.</li> </ul> <p><b>3. Implementation (April onwards)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Turn the design into a practical delivery plan.</li> <li>Set up the programme structure and responsibilities to ensure accountability and benefits realisation.</li> </ul>
<p>5. Further develop the council's approach to resident focus. Including a robust framework, a regular survey and the use of relevant forums.</p>	<p>Director – Thriving Communities</p>	<p>We will strengthen our approach to consultation and engagement by agreeing a new Consultation &amp; Engagement Strategy and Toolkit at Cabinet in December 2025. This will provide a clear framework and practical tools for consistent, high-quality engagement across the organisation and a foundational element of our refreshed operating model.</p> <p>To support delivery, we will produce a rolling consultation forward plan by July 2026, ensuring visibility and coordination of all planned engagement activity. In addition, we will agree and implement a resident satisfaction survey, establishing this as an annual undertaking to track perceptions and inform service improvements.</p> <p><b>Milestones</b></p> <p><b>1. Agree Consultation &amp; Engagement Strategy and Toolkit</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Cabinet approval in December 2025.</li> </ul> <p><b>2. Produce Rolling Consultation Forward Plan</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Publish and maintain forward plan by July 2026.</li> </ul> <p><b>3. Agree and Progress Resident Satisfaction Survey</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Launch survey and confirm cycle.</li> </ul>

Recommendations	CMT owner	Action
6. Review the capital programme operating model to drive timely delivery.	Director - Resources	<p>The capital programme team will focus on understanding, managing, and explaining project changes recognising that slippage is an inherent feature of large, complex capital programmes . Using our strong governance, assurance, compliance with procurement regulations, and transparent reporting we will embed the Capital Delivery Group ways of working to ensure delivery remains achievable and affordable. Actions are to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Continue applying existing mitigations that have driven improved performance.</li> <li>• Strengthen upfront planning, feasibility, and option development.</li> <li>• Prioritise and phase projects strategically.</li> <li>• Maintain monthly and quarterly programme monitoring and reporting.</li> <li>• Retain effective governance while streamlining decision routes via the Capital Delivery Group.</li> <li>• Build delivery capability (e.g., increasing capacity from 23 FTE to 45 FTE, plus Project Management Call-Off arrangements).</li> <li>• Communicate transparently, applying a prudent c.15% “negativity bias” in reporting.</li> </ul>
7. Map out the requirements for moving forward at the pace the council seeks with ICT and digital. Ensure CMT own the ICT/ digital blueprint and milestones for the next two years and that leadership responsibilities are clear.	Director – Enabler Services	<p>An independent ICT Strategic Review has been commissioned with key milestones being:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• August 2025: Independent ICT Review commissioned</li> <li>• Sept – Oct 2025: Review Team assess current service and ways of working based on 12 pillars of an ICT Governance Framework.</li> <li>• Nov 2025: Review Report and recommendations received.</li> <li>• Dec 2025: Review findings communicated.</li> <li>• Jan 2026: Delivery Plan agreed by CMT.</li> </ul> <p>This work will align with the longer-term focus on our organisational operating model and future transformation plan.</p>

## Theme 2: Financial Sustainability

Recommendations	CMT owner	Action
8. Given the underlying financial pressure, potential liabilities and risks – look further at the opportunities for savings/ efficiencies within the stabilisation and integration work and how to build up further resilience.	Director - Resources	<p>Work on the Medium-Term Financial Plan is already underway, drawing on the insights from the recent Budget Sprint, with the budget scheduled for Cabinet agreement in February. The MTFP and Annual Plan will be aligned to give the organisation a clear and consistent sense of direction. As we develop the new vision and refreshed operating model, financial sustainability will be embedded as a core principle, shaping both our long-term strategy and our day-to-day decision-making. Alongside this, we will put in place robust arrangements to monitor the delivery of agreed savings through 2026/27 and beyond, ensuring that planned improvements are achieved in practice. A strengthened strategic planning cycle will also be embedded across the organisation, creating a continuous focus on our financial position while supporting the delivery of service priorities and future ambitions.</p> <p><b>Medium-Term Financial Plan and Budget</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Dec-Jan: Finalise Budget Sprint outputs and draft MTFP.</li> <li>Feb: Cabinet approval of 2026/27 Budget and MTFP.</li> </ul> <p><b>Strategic Planning Alignment</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>March: Publish Annual Plan aligned with MTFP.</li> <li>May - Jun: Issue refreshed planning guidance; directorates complete aligned plans.</li> </ul> <p><b>Savings Delivery and Monitoring</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>From Apr: Quarterly savings reviews with clear escalation.</li> <li>Jul: Mid-year 2026/27 savings review.</li> </ul>

## Theme 3: Culture and governance

Recommendations	CMT owner	Action
9a Act on the known issues which are affecting the ability to provide effective corporate officer leadership across the wider SLT. Utilise suitable, specific external support.	Assistant Director – HR/OD (9a)	(9a) To strengthen corporate officer leadership across the wider Senior Leadership Team, the council will continue with the cultural review already underway, supported by external specialists. This work, which includes a specific focus on leadership behaviours and expectations, will produce recommendations for change by March 2026.
9b Empowering ADs as the organisation's engine with enhanced delegated powers and clearer decision journeys.	Chief Legal & Monitoring Officer (9b)	<p>(9b) Alongside, we will take steps to ensure Assistant Directors are more fully empowered as the operational engine of the organisation. This will include a review and refresh of the officer scheme of delegation, supported by training for all senior officers to ensure clarity and confidence in decision-making.</p> <p>This will include a review and refresh of the officer scheme of delegation, supported by training for all senior officers to ensure clarity and confidence in decision-making. We will also undertake a review of key decision journeys to identify where processes or governance arrangements may be hindering effective leadership. Any resulting changes will then be agreed and implemented to provide a clearer, more streamlined and consistent approach across the organisation. This work will be aligned with the development of the refreshed target operating model and transformation plan.</p> <p><b>Milestones</b></p> <p><b>December 2025</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>External cultural review progresses into detailed diagnostic work, including engagement with senior leaders.</li> <li>Review of the current officer scheme of delegation underway to identify areas for strengthening.</li> </ul> <p><b>January 2026</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Initial findings from the cultural review shared with CMT.</li> <li>Early decision-journey mapping begins to highlight where processes and governance are slowing delivery.</li> </ul> <p><b>February 2026</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Draft proposals for an updated scheme of delegation prepared for discussion with senior officers.</li> <li>Continued analysis of leadership culture, behaviours and expectations as part of the cultural review.</li> </ul>



Recommendations	CMT owner	Action
		<p><b>March 2026</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Cultural review delivers full recommendations on leadership and organisational behaviours.</li> <li>Consultation on proposed changes to delegation and decision-journeys takes place.</li> </ul> <p><b>April 2026</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Finalise and agree the refreshed officer scheme of delegation.</li> <li>Implement priority improvements to decision-journeys.</li> <li>Begin rollout of targeted training for senior officers to support strengthened leadership and clearer delegated authority.</li> </ul>
<p>10. Rebuild from the known relationship issues between some service areas and enabling services. Doing so in a way which helps to ensure a one council approach is taken and officers are supported to consistently work well across professional boundaries, as appropriate.</p>	<p>Assistant Director – HR/OD</p>	<p>The cultural review is underway and will continue to examine the causes of tensions between services and enabling functions. Its purpose is to clarify how the organisation works in practice and identify improvements to support more consistent, collaborative ways of working. The findings will feed into an Action Plan, to be finalised in March 2026, focused on strengthening a shared organisational vision and culture, reinforcing common values and behaviours, and improving cross-service collaboration.</p> <p>In parallel, we will introduce a “Ways of Working” framework that sets clear expectations for how colleagues work together. This will cover collaborative behaviours, constructive and courageous conversations, and professional standards, supported by visible leadership modelling. It will also be embedded in our leadership and management development offer to ensure consistent organisation-wide expectations.</p> <p><b>Milestones</b></p> <p><b>December 2025</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Cultural review diagnostic work continues, focusing on cross-boundary working and tensions between services.</li> <li>Initial drafting of the “Ways of Working” framework begins.</li> </ul> <p><b>January 2026</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Early cultural review insights shared with CMT, highlighting emerging themes around collaboration and professional behaviours.</li> <li>Engagement sessions held with leaders and managers to refine expectations for the Ways of Working framework.</li> </ul>

Recommendations	CMT owner	Action
		<p><b>February 2026</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Draft Action Plan outline produced, informed by cultural review findings.</li> <li>Updated draft of the Ways of Working framework prepared for wider consultation.</li> </ul> <p><b>March 2026</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Cultural Review delivers full recommendations and the final Action Plan is completed.</li> <li>Consultation on the Ways of Working framework with staff, unions and leadership groups.</li> </ul> <p><b>April 2026</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ways of Working framework finalised and approved.</li> <li>Initial rollout and communication campaign launched, supported by leadership and management development sessions.</li> </ul>
<p>11. Listen closely to the feedback from the staff survey and communicate how the council will respond to this and act on it. Do this to help the council to further develop the 'Together we are Westmorland and Furness' ambition. It may also help prevent further wellbeing issues.</p>	<p>Assistant Chief Executive</p>	<p>We have already taken action to share and publicise the findings of the 2025 staff survey, both corporately and at directorate level, which have continued to improve on the 2024 results in the vast majority of areas as a result of targeted and bespoke communications and employee engagement plan led by communications.</p> <p>These bespoke communications and engagement plans, including staff improvement plans will be refreshed corporately and at a directorate level in early 2026.</p> <p>Building on last years successful "You Said, We Did" Action Plan we will continue with this approach demonstrating how staff feedback is directly shaping our priorities and ways of working.</p> <p>As part of the Cultural Review, targeted listening sessions will be held by January 2026 to ensure staff voices help shape our cultural vision for the organisation.</p> <p>All this activity will be aligned with the newly agreed Employee Engagement Framework and also the Councils Internal Employee Communications Strategy, ensuring consistency and transparency.</p> <p>Work is already underway to address recurrent issues raised by staff through the staff survey.</p> <p><b>Milestones</b></p> <p><b>1. Share and Publicise Staff Survey Findings</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>August 2025: Complete corporate and directorate-level communications of survey results.</li> </ul>

Recommendations	CMT owner	Action
		<p><b>2. Refresh all Directorate Internal comms and employee engagement plans including our “You Said, We Did” Action Plan</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Feb 2026 : complete all directorate internal comms and employee engagement plans</li> <li>Feb 2026 : Refresh Communications Service plan to ensure it reflects staff feedback and shapes internal comms priorities.</li> </ul> <p><b>3. Deliver Targeted Listening Sessions</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Jan 2026: Hold sessions as part of the Cultural Review to ensure staff voices inform change.</li> </ul> <p><b>4. Align Activities with Engagement Framework and Communications Strategy</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>March 2026: Ensure all engagement work is consistent with the employee engagement framework and Communications Strategy.</li> </ul> <p><b>5. Have a plan to address Recurrent Issues Raised by Staff</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>March 2026: Implement improvements in areas identified.</li> </ul> <p><b>6. Update Internal Narrative</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>March 2026: Refresh Westmorland &amp; Furness internal messaging to align with the Annual Plan for 2026/27.</li> </ul> <p><b>7. Review Employee Engagement and Internal Communications Approaches</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>April 2026: Assess effectiveness and responsiveness of current approaches and make improvements.</li> </ul> <p><b>8. Track and Report Wellbeing Indicators Quarterly</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Quarterly: Monitor sickness absence, retention, and other wellbeing metrics</li> </ul>

Recommendations	CMT owner	Action
<p>12. Streamline internal processes and governance to ensure the council's approach to decision making is proportionate and appropriate, focused on the pace of delivery sought in each instance. This includes the culture and risk appetite around different decisions.</p>	<p>Director – Resources (12a)</p> <p>Chief Legal &amp; Monitoring Officer (12b)</p>	<p>We will continue to invite Directors and their Directorates to provide feedback on the Directors' Schemes of Authorisation, delegations, and propose any necessary constitutional amendments.</p> <p>The Good Governance Group will remain a key forum for reviewing and discussing governance matters, ensuring robust oversight. We are also embedding training on governance and decision-making across the organisation to strengthen capability and consistency.</p> <p>Internal processes identified as priorities for improvement have appropriate project teams in place with clear dates for delivery.</p> <p>Feedback captured through Leadership Team events will be analysed and acted upon using a “You Said, We Did” approach, ensuring transparency and responsiveness. In addition, we will implement a communications plan focused on governance and decision-making, including raising awareness of the Governance SharePoint pages and related resources.</p> <p>Finally, we will review the role of Corporate Management Team (CMT), refine agenda-setting processes, and introduce a strategic Forward Plan to improve alignment and prioritisation.</p> <p><b>Milestones</b></p> <p><b>1. Directors' Schemes of Authorisation &amp; Delegations Feedback</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>January 2026: Gather feedback from Directors and Directorates and draft amendments.</li> <li>February 2026: Submit proposed constitutional changes for approval.</li> </ul> <p><b>2. Good Governance Group Reviews</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ongoing monthly: First review in December 2025, then continue through May 2026.</li> </ul> <p><b>3. Embed Governance &amp; Decision-Making Training</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>February 2026: Launch updated training programme.</li> <li>March 2026: Complete initial rollout to all senior managers.</li> </ul> <p><b>4. Embed Governance &amp; Decision-Making Training</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>January 2026: Collect feedback from Leadership Team events.</li> <li>March 2026: Publish first “You Said, We Did” update.</li> </ul> <p><b>5. Implement Communications Plan on Governance</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>February 2026: Launch communications plan and SharePoint awareness campaign.</li> </ul> <p><b>6. Review Role of CMT &amp; Agenda Setting</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>April 2026: Complete review and agree changes.</li> <li>May 2026: Introduce strategic Forward Plan.</li> </ul>

Recommendations	CMT owner	Action
<p>13. Ensure there is increased corporate grip on the use of internal audit given the low number of completed internal audit reports and the three significant weaknesses in the external auditor's report.</p>	<p>Director - Resources</p>	<p>In 2024/25, 72% of the Audit Plan was delivered. For 2025/26 and 2026/27 we are tightening corporate oversight, ensuring clearer prioritisation, better alignment with strategic risks, and a more realistic balance of assurance and advisory work. The 2026/27 Plan will reduce the number of audits, focus on highest-risk areas, and explicitly support major organisational change.</p> <p>External audit (Grant Thornton) raised three key issues in the 2023/24 AAR. Two are now complete; one is in progress:</p> <p><b>1. IT Disaster Recovery</b> - Completed July 2025. Corporate IT DR Plan in place; testing scheduled for 2025/26 in place by March 2026.</p> <p><b>2. Procurement and Contract Management</b> - Partially Completed. Significant progress on Procurement Act readiness, staffing, transparency, contracts register and pipeline. A corporate external review (Nov 2025) and a new contracts database are being implemented. Internal Audit will follow up through the 2025/26 Plan.</p> <p><b>3. Financial Statements</b> - Completed. 2023/24 weaknesses addressed; 2024/25 statements published on time, audit underway; strengthened Accountancy capacity and training now embedded.</p> <p><b>Milestones</b></p> <p><b>Q4 2025</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Finalise 2026/27 Audit Plan with tighter corporate prioritisation.</li> <li>Complete external procurement review (Nov 2025).</li> <li>Implement contracts database tool.</li> </ul> <p><b>Q1 2026</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>CMT oversight session on Internal Audit performance and high-risk audits.</li> <li>Updated Internal Audit Follow-Up Protocol to strengthen accountability for overdue actions.</li> </ul> <p><b>Q2 2026</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Mid-year progress report to CMT on 2025/26 Audit Plan delivery.</li> <li>Integrate Internal Audit coverage with refreshed Strategic Risk Register.</li> </ul> <p><b>Q4 2026</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>2025/26 Audit Plan final delivery; annual opinion to Audit Committee (June 2026).</li> <li>Begin development of 2027/28 Plan with corporate prioritisation embedded as business-as-usual.</li> </ul>

Recommendations	CMT owner	Action
14. Further develop Overview and Scrutiny using the feedback given throughout this report to inform those steps.	Assistant Chief Executive	<p>A Scrutiny Development Plan has since been agreed by Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee, providing a 12 month programme of development work covering work programming, participation, communications, training, development of performance indicators, and targeted review activity.</p> <p>Additional staff have recently been appointed to increase capacity and support delivery of the programme.</p> <p>Providing oversight and scrutiny of the council's financial and transformation plans will be a key focus over the next 12 months.</p> <p>Plan delivery will be monitored by Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee.</p>

## Theme 4: Place priorities

Recommendations	CMT owner	Action
15. Move at pace to ensure the council has in place the right leadership, processes and capability to deliver on Team Barrow and the agility this requires.	Director – Thriving Places	<p>Clear action has already been taken to establish a separation between accountable body and delivery roles within Westmorland &amp; Furness. The Director of Thriving Places now acts as the lead officer for W&amp;F, providing strategic oversight for delivery. In addition, W&amp;F has been confirmed as the lead agency for the Heart of Barrow and Brilliant Futures programmes, reinforcing its leadership role in key initiatives. Looking ahead, a longer-term governance review will be undertaken to ensure robust structures and clarity of responsibilities as these programmes evolve.</p>
16. Further embrace, and prepare for at a political level, the opportunities of being on the Devolution Priority Programme (DPP) and how this can contribute to and help shape the future agenda for Westmorland and Furness.	Assistant Chief Executive	<p>Cabinet granted consent to proceed with devolution on 14 October 2025. Engagement continues through the joint working arrangements with Cumberland Council and with the OPFCC. The new authority will be established early in 2026 with mayoral elections in May 2027.</p> <p>The focus for the first year of the new authority will be on developing the capacity and capability of the new organisation to support inclusive growth across Cumbria, and to secure tangible benefits for the residents and business of Westmorland and Furness.</p> <p>Internally, Members and Officers will work together to ensure Westmorland &amp; Furness engages fully in the creation of the new authority and is clear on the specific outcomes it wants to achieve in the short and medium term.</p>

Recommendations	CMT owner	Action
<p>17. Put in place quickly, long term, monitored delivery plans to deliver the economic plan and the homes that Westmorland and Furness needs. Use place partners to help do this.</p>	<p>Director – Thriving Places</p>	<p>The Westmorland and Furness Economic Strategy (2025–2035) is scheduled for adoption by Cabinet in February 2026, following extensive stakeholder engagement throughout Summer and Autumn 2025. Alongside this, a detailed five-year action plan will be developed by March 2026 to drive delivery of the strategy’s priorities.</p> <p>On housing, through the Team Barrow Housing Task Force, a Delivery Plan is due for completion in January 2026, while implementation of the Westmorland and Furness Housing Strategy (2025–2030) action plan is already underway. In addition, the Affordable Housing Delivery Model report will be to Cabinet for decision on the preferred delivery model expected by March 2026.</p> <p>In parallel we will work with Cumberland Council and the Strategic Authority to deliver Cumbria’s Going for Growth strategy with a focus on moving from vision to delivery — turning the 20-year plan into deliverable projects, investments, and partnerships. The Going for Growth strategy is designed as the framework that will feed directly into Cumbria’s Local Growth Plan (LGP). This will provide a short- to medium-term delivery plan that translate priorities into funded projects, timelines, and measurable outcomes.</p>



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zatelefonować pod numer 0300 373 3300

Se quiser aceder a esta informação na sua língua,  
telefone para o 0300 373 3300

Bu bilgiyi kendi dilinizde görmek istiyorsanız lütfen  
0300 373 3300 numaralı telefonu arayınız

