

2.9 Peterborough City Council Independent Improvement and Assurance Panel - Terms of Reference

Following the publication of two independent reports that make up the External Assurance Review of Peterborough City Council, the Minister of State for Equalities and Levelling Up Communities has requested the Council establish an Improvement and Assurance Panel of non-executive advisers, to remain in place for two years to advise on and provide a regular six-monthly commentary for the Council on the progress with its improvement plan.

2.9.1 Purpose

2.9.1.1 The purpose of the Panel is:

- To provide external advice, challenge, and expertise to Peterborough City Council in driving forward the development and delivery of their improvement plan.
- To provide assurance to the Council and Secretary of State of the Council's progress on delivering their improvement plan.
- To provide six monthly reports to the Council on the progress of the delivery of the Improvement Plan.

2.9.1.2 This will involve:

- Providing regular advice, challenge, and support to the Council on the full range of their improvement activities, and in particular on delivery of the recommendations in the CIPFA and Andrew Flockhart reports published on 3rd November 2021 to ensure financial sustainability of the Council in two years (financial year 2023/24).
- Working together across specialisms and acknowledging as well as challenging key dependencies with collegiate approach to managing and resolving risk.
- Exploring key issues in detail through deep dives and specially commissioned pieces of work and through workshops.
- Ensuring key decisions are made cognisant of the financial implications and impact on in-year budgets and the long term MTFS.
- Providing written commentaries on the Council's progress to the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities on the Council's progress, including whether there needs to be any reconsideration of the locally led approach set out in the letter to the Leader of the Council from the Minister dated, 2nd November 2021.

2.9.1.3 The Panel will convene for the first time in December 2021 and is expected to conclude in December 2023. Panel meetings will be held in private, and any minutes produced will not be published. The Panel's first initial response to the Council's Improvement Plan work will be end of January 2022, and thereafter the six monthly reporting regime will commence as set out in paragraph 1 above.

2.9.1.4 The Panel will meet monthly in the first instance and will keep under review the frequency of these meetings.

2.9.2 The Improvement and Assurance Panel will comprise:

Independent Chair	Eleanor Kelly
Independent External Member (Finance)	Chris Buss
Independent External Member (Governance)	Andrew Flockhart
Independent External Member (Service)	Chris Naylor
Independent External Member (Assets, Contracts and Companies)	Clive Heaphy
Independent External Member (LGA)	Rachel Litherland

In attendance:

Leader of the Council

Chief Executive

2.9.2.1 Additional independent external members may be appointed to the Panel in the future if required.

2.9.3 Wider Local and Political Engagement

2.9.3.1 The Improvement and Assurance Panel will work closely with the other improvement boards/support mechanisms across the Council.

2.9.4 Costs

2.9.4.1 Any costs associated with the Improvement and Assurance Panel will be met by Peterborough City Council.

2.9.4.2 Panel members will be paid a fee for their work. The fee will be paid on a personal basis.

2.9.4.3 Panel members will need to work flexibly as the demand of the role requires. However, Peterborough City Council may wish to agree in advance the number of days advice to be provided by each Panel member over each 12-month period.

2.9.4.4 The Panel will be supported by an effective programme office to ensure that the overall programme plan is proactively tracked, kept up to date and that issues and risks are managed on a day-to-day basis through officers.