

GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE

8 JANUARY 2026

Present:

Councillors Bullivant (Chair), Henderson (Vice-Chair), Nutley, Clarence, Palethorpe and Nuttall

Independent Person: S Geneder

Members in Attendance:

Councillors Keeling and MacGregor

Officers in Attendance:

Charlie Fisher, Democratic Services Manager and Deputy Monitoring Officer

Abbie Cook, Legal Assistant

Chris Morgan, Assistant Democratic Services Officer

Rueben Hodge-Brooks, Project Management and Performance Specialist

Trish Corns, Principal Democratic Services Officer

31. MINUTES

It was **PROPOSED** by Councillor Nutley and **SECONDED** by Councillor Nuttall and

RESOLVED

That the minutes of the previous meeting be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

32. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor Phil Bullivant declared an interest in Item 5 on the Agenda, as the current Chair of the Governance Committee.

33. DISPENSATION - MEMBERS ALLOWANCES SCHEME

Councillor Bullivant introduced the item and the recommendations.

It was **PROPOSED** by Councillor Palethorpe and **SECONDED** by Councillor Nutley and

RESOLVED

That the Committee agree to:

- 1) Approve the granting of a general dispensation to all Teignbridge District Councillors to be able to take part in discussions and vote in items of business relating to the Members' Allowances Scheme.

- 2) That the dispensations are granted until the next District Council elections, or until such time as the District Council ceases to exist, whichever event comes first.

34. RECOMMENDATIONS FROM THE INDEPENDENT REMUNERATION PANEL (IRP)

Councillor Bullivant relinquished the Chair and Councillor Henderson acted as Chair for this item.

Councillor Henderson introduced the item to the Committee.

Councillor Clarence asked for clarification that only one Special Responsibility Allowance is paid to any one Member, which was confirmed.

It was **PROPOSED** by Councillor Palethorpe and **SECONDED** by Councillor Nuttall and

RESOLVED

That the Committee recommend to Full Council that:

1. Travel for those receiving a Special Responsibility Allowance (SRA)

Recommended

The existing practice as set out in Section 8f of the Constitution – Members Allowance Scheme as below be confirmed:

“The SRA is paid to recognise the additional commitment and time required to fulfil each role and covers subsistence and travel for attending meetings not listed in Appendix A.”

Outside the boundary of the District a separate travel claim can be made.

Justification - The Council should be consistent with the norm of other South West Councils as above

2. SRA for the Chair of the new Governance Committee

Recommended

The SRA for the Chair of the Governance Committee continue and be set at the current SRA of £3,159.71.

Justification – This is a reasonable remuneration given comparison with and responsibility of other SRA positions.

3. Annual review of expenditure and benchmarking

Recommended

There be no increase in the Council's Basic Allowance other than the annual increase in line with Local Authority employee pay increase.

Justification - The Basic Allowance for Teignbridge is acceptable given comparisons with other SW Districts. Benchmarking evidence 7 of the 14 SW Districts have a BA less than the Council and 6 greater

35. CODE OF CONDUCT COMPLAINTS UPDATE

The Legal Assistant gave an overview of the Code of Conduct complaints received since the last Governance Committee meeting.

7 complaints had been received, 6 were deemed invalid and 1 progressed to Stage 4 before considered that no further action be taken.

The Committee noted the update.

36. REFORMS TO THE STANDARDS AND CONDUCT FRAMEWORK

The Democratic Services Manager and Deputy Monitoring Officer appraised Members of the Government's proposed reforms to the Standards Regime in England, as announced on 11th November 2025.

The Government intends to lay new legislation to bring in these reforms and repeal elements of the Localism Act 2011.

Councillor Palethorpe asked for clarification regarding the voting rights of Independent Persons who are currently co-opted, non-voting Members of the Committee. Officers agreed to respond to Members after the meeting.

Councillor Palethorpe also asked for clarification regarding suspensions and the 6-month rule for attendance, it was noted that the intended forthcoming legislation would give further detail and clarification on the proposals.

37. MEMBER TRAINING LOG

The Democratic Services Manager and Deputy Monitoring Officer appraised Members of the Member Training Log, details of training sessions held since the last Governance Committee meeting. It was highlighted that Councillor's Profile Pages on the website now have a "Training" tab and sessions which Members attend are recorded on their profile pages.

Councillor Bullivant commented on the attendance figures of sessions.

Councillor Keeling asked for clarification regarding recording of external training undertaken by Councillors, and it was confirmed this could be included in their training records.

38. COUNCILLOR DIGITAL SKILLS FRAMEWORK

The Committee received a verbal presentation from the Project Management and Performance Specialist on the Councillor Digital Skills Framework.

The Digital Skills Framework sets a baseline of 11 categories of digital skills across all Staff and Members to support the digital transformation of the Council and to address any skills gaps and training requirements. Within each of the categories are skills that are required and levels of competency within those skills.

The Committee were given an overview of the Councillor's Digital Skills Requirements relating to skills, awareness of policies and proficiency using digital tools and systems.

The Council is also providing training opportunities for Councillors to improve their digital skills and ensure they meet the framework requirements.

Councillors discussed the framework and their experiences of using digital tools and training opportunities they have already taken part in. Councillors welcomed the opportunity to have further training.

39. COUNCILLOR DBS CHECKS

The Committee considered this item, as requested by Councillor John Nutley at the last meeting of the Committee.

Councillor Nutley spoke in favour of Councillors having the opportunity to have a Disclosure and Baring Service (DBS) check.

Councillor MacGregor addressed the Committee in relation to the cost of the checks and the need for checks to be undertaken. Councillor MacGregor raised points regarding information handling, the legality of the checks and that they are a snapshot in time.

The Democratic Services Manager and Deputy Monitoring Officer highlighted the agenda item was to gather the views of Members at this stage. DBS checks are not mandatory for District Councils, but an enhanced checks are recommended by the Government for Upper Tier and Unitary Councillors serving on committees which discharge education or social services functions. Many local authorities offer basic checks for all Councillors, including other District Councils in Devon on a voluntary basis.

The Committee and Members attending discussed the cost to the Council, the administration of the checks.

Councillor Palethorpe spoke in favour of DBS checks for Councillors as part of the Council's Safeguarding Policies and ensuring publishing a list of those who have undertaken an enhanced DBS check.

Councillor Clarence spoke of his experience as a Devon County Councillor and welcomed a voluntary DBS scheme. It was clarified that checks should be completed every 3 years to ensure they remain up to date.

Councillor Henderson spoke of his experience of Teignmouth Town Council and echoed the concerns regarding information handling.

Councillor Bullivant highlighted the Council's induction training and safeguarding training, and in support of checks as a public assurance.

It was confirmed that a further report would be brought to the next meeting to provide more information to Members and address their points.

40. CONSTITUTION REVIEW WORKING GROUP UPDATE

Councillor Bullivant introduced the item and the meetings of the Constitution Review Working Group held since the last Committee meeting.

The Democratic Services Manager and Deputy Monitoring Officer gave an overview of notes and the proposals due to be considered at Full Council meeting on Thursday 15th January 2025.

Councillor Bullivant spoke to this item regarding the proposed Councillor Role Profiles and recommended for Members to review those documents.

Councillor Bullivant asked for clarification regarding when the Working Group was due to be wound up.

The meeting started at 10.00 am and finished at 10.45 am.

Chairman