

GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE

A meeting of the **Governance Committee** will be held on **Tuesday, 30th June, 2026** in the **Council Chamber, Forde House, Brunel Road, Newton Abbot, TQ12 4XX** at **10.00 am**

PHIL SHEARS
Managing Director

Membership:

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

Please Note: Filming is permitted during Committee meeting with the exception where there are confidential or exempt items, which may need to be considered in the absence of the press and public. By entering the meeting room you are consenting to being filmed.

A G E N D A

Part I

Governance Committee Terms of Reference

The Committee's Terms of Reference is attached for reference.

Public participation and attending meetings

Information pertaining to public participation rules and attending Council and Committee meetings can be found on the following webpage: [Public participation and attending meetings - Teignbridge District Council](#)

1. **Apologies for Absence**

2. **Minutes**

(Pages 7 - 10)

To approve and sign the minutes of the meeting held on 23rd April 2026.

3. **Declarations of Interest**

Information pertaining to the Members' Code of Conduct and guidance relating to declaring interests can be found on the following webpage: [Teignbridge District Council – Councillor Conduct](#)

4. **Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman Annual Letter 2025/26** (Pages 11 - 16)

To review the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman Annual Letter 2025/2026 to Teignbridge District Council.

5. **Review of the Code of Conduct Complaints Process** (Pages 17 - 48)

To provide Members with an opportunity to review the Code of Conduct complaints process and arrangements for dealing with standards complaints guidance.

6. **Code of Conduct Complaints Update** (Pages 49 - 54)

To update Councillors on the Councillor Code of Conduct complaints received.

7. **Annual Review of the Member Development Strategy** (Pages 55 - 64)

To review the Member Development Strategy.

8. **Member Training Log** (Pages 65 - 68)

To review the Member Training and Briefing log from April – June 2026.

9. **Referral from Full Council - Adoption of the Local Government Association's Debate Not Hate Campaign** (Pages 69 - 72)

As recommended by Annual Council on Tuesday 19th May 2026:

The Monitoring Officer report to the Governance Committee on the adoption by the Council of the Local Government Association's Debate Not Hate campaign and in particular the Ending Abuse in Public Life Council Self-Assessment toolkit as a means of creating a culture of safety and respect for members within and without the Council Chamber.

10. **Referral from Full Council: Member-Officer Protocol** (Pages 73 - 78)

As recommended by Annual Council on Tuesday 19th May 2026:

The Monitoring Officer and Head of Paid Service report jointly to the Governance Committee on a revised member – officer protocol to include clear guidance on:

- *Members' rights to accessing Council information;*
- *Member visits to officer working areas*

Noting that Annual Council on Tuesday 19th May 2026 agreed a revised Member Officer Protocol at the meeting (Agenda Item 7c - [Agenda for Full Council on Tuesday, 19th May 2026](#)).

11. **Constitution Review Working Group update** (Pages 79 - 84)
For information, to update Members on the work of the Constitution Review Working Group. The Working Group's final meeting was on 30th April 2026.

12. **Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1985 - Exclusion of Press and Public**

RECOMMENDED that, under Section 100A(4) of the Local Government Act 1972, the press and public be excluded from the meeting of the particular item(s) on the grounds that it involve(s) the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in the relevant paragraphs of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Act.

Part II: Items suggested for discussion with the press and public excluded

13. **Governance Committee Determination of Code of Conduct Complaint** (Pages 85 - 178)
Report of the Independent Investigator and Governance Committee determination of Code of Conduct Complaint (FS-CASE-694000403).

If you would like this information in another format, please telephone 01626 361101 or e-mail info@teignbridge.gov.uk

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3.11 Governance Committee

3.11.1 Membership: The Committee has six Members who are elected councillors. The Committee will also appoint up to four Independent Persons, who are non-voting in relation to its standards remit. The Committee is appointed in accordance with the statutory requirements to achieve political balance. The Chair, Vice Chair and Members of the Committee are appointed by Full Council at the Annual Meeting.

3.11.2 Training requirements: Each Member of the Committee is required to complete in full an induction programme and undertake regular mandatory training. Any Member not undertaking these training activities will be unable to serve (or continue to serve) on the Committee until such time that the full training requirement has been met.

3.11.3 Areas of Work: Its role is to advise the Council on the operation of its Constitution, Governance and decision-making arrangements, on the adoption and revision of the Members Code of Conduct and for monitoring the operation of the code.

(a) Governance arrangements:

- To review the operation of the Constitution, procedural rules, conventions, codes, protocols, and working practices;
- To make recommendations to the Council to make changes to the Constitution;
- To oversee the Council's programmes for Member development and training;
- To make recommendations to the Council on its Scheme of Members' Allowances; and
- To consider findings of maladministration and Public Interest Reports issued by the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman.

(b) Standards:

In undertaking its responsibilities (below), the Committee may appoint sub-committees to deal with its business as follows:

- To promote and maintain high standards of conduct by Councillors and co-opted Members;
- To advise the Council on the adoption or revision of the Members' Code of Conduct;
- To advise or train councillors, co-opted members and parish / town councillors on matters relating to the Members' Code of Conduct;
- To be responsible for the Council's procedures for investigating and responding to complaints.
- To deal with the local filtering of complaints (including in respect to parish and town councillors), advise on declarations of interests and grant dispensation requests (where these are not dealt with by the Monitoring Officer under delegated powers);
- To conduct local hearings and determination of sanctions should a breach of the code of conduct be found; and in such cases:
 - a) the sub-committee membership be limited to 3 Members of the committee, selected to sit on the particular sub-committee according to their availability;

- b) when dealing with complaints about a parish / town councillor, the sub-committee should also include a non-voting parish / town council representative; and
- c) at least one independent person should be consulted by the sub-committee (or full Committee as appropriate) prior to determination of any complaint or otherwise as required by law.

GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE

23 APRIL 2026

Present:

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

Independent Person: H Elliot & S Genender

Members in Attendance:

Councillors MacGregor

Officers in Attendance:

Charlie Fisher, Democratic Services Manager and Monitoring Officer

Christopher Morgan, Assistant Democratic Services Officer

41. MINUTES

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

RESOLVED

That the minutes of the previous meeting on Thursday 8th January 2026 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

42. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor Palethorpe declared an interest in FS-CASE-718913067 as the subject of the complaint. During this item he presented his case and then left the room.

43. CODE OF CONDUCT COMPLAINTS UPDATE

The Committee reviewed the list of Code of Conduct complaints. It was considered that the number of open cases had reduced significantly to 7, of which only 3 were ongoing.

The Committee noted the update.

44. MEMBER TRAINING LOG

Councillor Bullivant asked for members to be reminded to advise Democratic Services of any external training they had undertaken so that their training records could be updated.

45. GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE ANNUAL REPORT 2025/26

Councillors noted that the following alleged breaches had been received in 2025/26:

- 31 complaints received about Member Conduct (this includes District, Town and Parish Councillors)
- 22 were resolved through no further action or were invalid complaints
- 2 were resolved through informal resolution
- 1 proceeded to formal investigation
- 1 was determined by the Governance Committee
- 6 are currently at different stages within the process to be resolved

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

RESOLVED

That the Committee:

- (1) Approve the Governance Committee Annual Report 2025/2026 and recommend its adoption at Full Council.
- (2) Agree for the Democratic Services Manager and Monitoring Officer to make any necessary updates and amendments to the Annual Report before it is submitted to Full Council, in consultation with the Chair.

46. CONSTITUTION REVIEW WORKING GROUP UPDATE

The Committee received an update on the work of the Constitution Review Group, which held its final session on 16 April 2026.

Councillors Bullivant and Palethorpe, both on the review group, thanked Officers and CFGS for their assistance.

47. LOCAL GOVERNMENT (ACCESS TO INFORMATION) ACT 1985 - EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC

RESOLVED that, under Section 100A(4) of the Local Government Act 1972, the press and public be excluded from the meeting of the particular item(s) on the grounds that it involve(s) the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in the relevant paragraphs of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Act.

48. GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE DETERMINATION OF CODE OF CONDUCT COMPLAINTS

a) **FS-CASE-718913067**

The Chair and Monitoring Officer introduced the item to the Committee.

The complaint concerned the conduct of Councillor Palethorpe in 2 emails to Cllr J Taylor. The complaint alleges that the emails were contrary to sections 2, 4, and 5 of the Code of Conduct (Bullying and harassment, breaching confidentiality, and bringing the Council into disrepute). The complainant for this application was Councillor Macgregor.

The Chair invited Councillor Macgregor to speak. He stated that the investigators report should be ignored due to its heavy focus on the Full Council meeting the previous year and asked the Committee to investigate further.

The Chair also invited Councillor Palethorpe to speak. He stated that he had sought to defend officers from unsubstantiated claims.

The two Councillors then left the room whilst the Committee deliberated.

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

RESOLVED

That the Committee:

- (1) Accepts the report of the Independent Investigator.
- (2) Determines there was no breach of the Code of Conduct and agrees to no further action.
- (3) In its deliberations, agrees with the Independent Investigator that Councillor Palethorpe in his letter to the Police and Crime Commissioner and writing "in [his] capacity as Deputy Leader of Teignbridge District Council" was inappropriate and should not have been sent.

The meeting started at 10.00 am and finished at 10.56 am.

CLLR P BULLIVANT
Chairman

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Local Government & Social Care OMBUDSMAN

20 May 2026

By email

Mr Shears
Managing Director
Teignbridge District Council

Dear Mr Shears

Annual Review letter 2025-26

I write to you with your annual summary of complaint statistics from the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman for the year ending 31 March 2026.

We recognise that local authorities continue to face significant pressures in delivering services to their communities. We hope the data and insight we share with you each year remains a useful tool for reflection and continuous improvement. Please consider it as part of your corporate governance processes.

[Your annual statistics are available here.](#)

In addition, you can find the detail of the decisions we have made about your Council, read reports we have issued, and view the service improvements your Council has agreed to make as a result of our investigations, as well as previous annual review letters.

We will write to organisations in July where there is exceptional practice or where we have concerns about complaint handling. Not all organisations will get a letter. If you do receive a letter it will be sent in advance of its publication on our website on 15 July 2026.

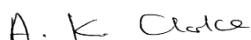
Supporting complaint and service improvement

We remain committed to supporting the sector to embed effective systems of redress. Where authorities are navigating reorganisation and devolution, we are ready to help ensure that robust complaint handling is built into new arrangements from the outset. Please do get in touch if your organisation would benefit from our advice and guidance.

Our [Complaint Handling Code](#), in force since April 2025, is now applied in our casework and offers structure and support to your local complaint system. Our training programme provides a flexible, expert-led route to building complaints capability across your teams, with courses open for individual delegates to book. Contact training@lgo.org.uk for more information.

Our Annual Review of Local Government Complaints will be published in July 2026, setting out the national picture of complaints, trends across service areas, and emerging systemic issues. We encourage you to read it alongside your own organisation's data.

Yours sincerely,



Amerdeep Clarke
Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman
Chair, Commission for Local Administration in England

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Reference	Authority	Category	Subcategory	Received
24013288	Teignbridge District Council	Corporate & Other Services	Standards committees	11/04/25
25000611	Teignbridge District Council	Housing	Allocations	14/04/25
25000954	Teignbridge District Council	Corporate & Other Services	Standards committees	17/04/25
25002818	Teignbridge District Council	Environmental Services & Public Protection & Regulation	Noise	16/05/25
25003269	Teignbridge District Council	Planning & Development	Policy/Local Developmt framework	22/05/25
25003715	Teignbridge District Council	Corporate & Other Services	Elections and electoral register	29/05/25
25004153	Teignbridge District Council	Planning & Development	Policy/Local Developmt framework	04/06/25
25005447	Teignbridge District Council	Planning & Development	Other planning application	18/06/25
25015110	Teignbridge District Council	Corporate & Other Services	Corp & Other Servs-other	17/10/25
25016937	Teignbridge District Council	Highways & Transport	Parking provision	23/10/25
25018243	Teignbridge District Council	Corporate & Other Services	Standards committees	06/11/25
25018333	Teignbridge District Council	Environmental Services & Public Protection & Regulation	Antisocial behaviour	20/11/25
25020570	Teignbridge District Council	Planning & Development	Householder planning application	11/12/25
25021590	Teignbridge District Council	Benefits & Tax	Council tax	26/03/26
25023173	Teignbridge District Council	Planning & Development	Other planning application	05/01/26
25023630	Teignbridge District Council	Benefits & Tax	Council tax support	12/02/26
25023633	Teignbridge District Council	Corporate & Other Services	Standards committees	18/01/26
25024074	Teignbridge District Council	Planning & Development	Enforcement - other	21/01/26
25025254	Teignbridge District Council	Environmental Services & Public Protection & Regulation	Antisocial behaviour	29/01/26
25029268	Teignbridge District Council	Planning & Development	Enforcement - other	12/03/26

Reference	Authority	Category	Subcategory	Decided	Decision	Decision Reason	Remedy
24008857	Teignbridge District Council	Environmental Services & Public Protection & Regulation	Antisocial behaviour	16/04/25	Closed after initial enquiries	Not warranted by alleged fault	
24013288	Teignbridge District Council	Corporate & Other Services	Standards committees	20/06/25	Closed after initial enquiries	Not warranted by alleged fault	
24014833	Teignbridge District Council	Planning & Development	Other planning application	23/07/25	Not Upheld	No worthwhile outcome achievable by further investigation	
24018861	Teignbridge District Council	Planning & Development	Enforcement-householder	27/05/25	Closed after initial enquiries	Not warranted by alleged fault	
24020107	Teignbridge District Council	Planning & Development	Planning & Developmt-other	22/09/25	Not Upheld	no fault	
24021774	Teignbridge District Council	Corporate & Other Services	Corp & Other Servs-other	29/04/25	Closed after initial enquiries	Not warranted by alleged injustice	
25000611	Teignbridge District Council	Housing	Allocations	03/07/25	Closed after initial enquiries	Other reason not to investigate	
25000954	Teignbridge District Council	Corporate & Other Services	Standards committees	17/04/25	Referred back for local resolution	Premature Decision - advice given	
25002818	Teignbridge District Council	Environmental Services & Public Protection & Regulation	Noise	31/07/25	Closed after initial enquiries	No worthwhile outcome achievable by investigation	
25003269	Teignbridge District Council	Planning & Development	Policy/Local Developmt framework	07/08/25	Closed after initial enquiries	26B(2) not made in 12 months	
25003715	Teignbridge District Council	Corporate & Other Services	Elections and electoral register	19/06/25	Closed after initial enquiries	Not warranted by alleged fault	
25004153	Teignbridge District Council	Planning & Development	Policy/Local Developmt framework	05/09/25	Closed after initial enquiries	Sec 26(7) - all or most	
25005447	Teignbridge District Council	Planning & Development	Other planning application	18/06/25	Referred back for local resolution	Premature Decision - advice given	
25015110	Teignbridge District Council	Corporate & Other Services	Corp & Other Servs-other	24/10/25	Closed after initial enquiries	Not warranted by alleged injustice	
25018243	Teignbridge District Council	Corporate & Other Services	Standards committees	06/11/25	Referred back for local resolution	Premature Decision - advice given	
25023173	Teignbridge District Council	Planning & Development	Other planning application	05/01/26	Referred back for local resolution	Premature Decision - advice given	

Reference	Authority	Category	Subcategory	Decided	Remedy	Remedy Achieved	Satisfaction with Compliance
No compliance data recorded during the period.							

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**Teignbridge District Council
Governance Committee
Tuesday 30th June 2026
Part i**

Annual Review of the Code of Conduct Complaints Process

Purpose of Report

To provide the opportunity for Members to review the Code of Conduct Complaints Process and Arrangements for dealing with Standards Complaints.

Recommendation(s)

The Committee RESOLVES to:

- (1) Review the Code of Conduct Complaints Process and Arrangements for dealing with Standards Complaints Document.
- (2) Consider the benchmarking information relating to appeals and investigations.
- (3) Consider further revisions to the process in the meeting.
- (4) If necessary, delegate authority to the Monitoring Officer to make revisions to the process and documents in Appendix 2 and 3.

Financial Implications

No financial implications arise from this report.

Charlie Fisher – Democratic Services Manager & Monitoring Officer

Email: charlie.fisher@teignbridge.gov.uk

Legal Implications

The Localism Act 2011 requires the Council to adopt a Code of Conduct which the Council complies with and to deal with arrangements for reviewing complaints. The details of the arrangements for the operation of the Code of Conduct are the responsibility of the Council.

Charlie Fisher – Democratic Services Manager & Monitoring Officer

Email: charlie.fisher@teignbridge.gov.uk

Risk Assessment

No direct risk implications arise from this report, Breach of the Code of Conduct is Corporate Risk and the Committee contributes to the mitigation of this risk.

Charlie Fisher – Democratic Services Manager & Monitoring Officer

Email: charlie.fisher@teignbridge.gov.uk

Environmental/ Climate Change Implications

No direct environment or climate change implications arise from this report.

Charlie Fisher – Democratic Services Manager & Monitoring Officer

Email: charlie.fisher@teignbridge.gov.uk

Report Author

Charlie Fisher – Democratic Services Manager & Monitoring Officer

charlie.fisher@teignbridge.gov.uk

Executive Member

Councillor Richard Keeling – Leader

Appendices

1. Benchmarking investigations procedures
2. Code of Conduct Complaints Process
3. Arrangements for dealing with Standards Complaints.

1. Introduction/Background

The Localism Act 2011 requires for local authorities to have mechanisms in place to deal with allegations and complaints against councillors in relation to the Code of Conduct.

The Council adopted its current Code of Conduct in 2021 and the Code of Conduct Complaints process in November 2023. This is supported by the Arrangements document, agreed by the Governance Committee in October 2025.

2. Code of Conduct Complaint Process

The Council agreed the process in November 2023 and this process has been operational since then. There is a 9 stage process, depending on the route of the complaint. However, the vast majority of cases do not reach stage 9 and are instead dealt with in Stage 2 and Stage 6.

It is good practice to continue to review the process to ensure it is operational and still meets the needs of complainants and subject members.

3. Benchmarking Review of Appeals Decisions

The then Standards Committee were briefed in July 2025 on the current process and the views of the then Monitoring Officer on the appeals system, which currently allows for appeals at Stage 2 (Validity Check), Stage 6 (Decision pathway) or Stage 9 (Governance Committee finalisation).

The Monitoring Officer has completed a benchmarking exercise to other Local Authorities in the South West regarding appeal stages for Members to consider

- Cornwall Council – No right of appeal of the initial rejection decisions if the complaint is invalid. Reviews accepted only at later stages for valid complaints.
- Plymouth City Council – No right of appeal against the decision of the Monitoring Officer or Committee.
- South Hams and West Devon – No right of appeal against the decision of the Monitoring Officer or Audit and Governance (Hearing) Sub-Committee.
- East Devon – No right of appeal against the decisions of the Monitoring Officer, Standards Assessment Sub Committee or Hearing Sub Committee.
- North Devon – No right of appeal of the decision of the Monitoring Officer and/or Standards Hearing Panel
- Mid Devon – Only for Sub-Committee Hearings to determine if the procedures were correctly followed and not the complaint itself.

- Devon – No right of appeal against the decision of the Standards Committee or the Monitoring Officer’s decision.
- Somerset – No right of appeal against the decisions of the Monitoring Officer or Panel Standards Hearing Sub-Committee.

The benchmarking of other local authorities in the South West highlights that the Council’s stages for appeal are lenient, where many other local authorities do not allow any rights of appeal to any decision. Those local authorities instead refer complainants or subject members to the Local Government Ombudsman or Judicial Review.

The Committee should determine whether this is acceptable to them or if the process should be revised.

4. Arrangements for dealing with Standards Complaints

The Committee approved the current arrangements document on 2nd October 2025, giving more guidance to Members, the Public, the Monitoring Officer, Authorised Officers and Independent Persons on the operation of the Code of Conduct Complaints Procedure.

The LGA guidance on Member Model Code of Conduct Complaints Handling highlights the need for transparency about the conduct of councillors and the mechanisms for dealing with alleged breaches. It recommends the use of a two-stage test in assessing complaints; 1 - the jurisdictional test and 2 - a local criteria assessment, to ensure that both the complainant and subject member know and understand how a decision has been reached in relation to a code of conduct complaint and that each complaint is reviewed fairly and against the same criteria.

Alongside the LGA Guidance, we have looked at the arrangements of neighbouring authorities and the criteria they use in assessing complaints.

Investigations Framework

The Chair and Vice Chair of the Committee asked the Monitoring Officer following the Governance Committee meeting on 23rd April 2026 to review the Investigations procedure within the Council’s arrangements document and benchmark to other local authorities under a range of headings.

Benchmarking to other Local Authorities

The Monitoring Officer has completed a benchmarking exercise to other Local Authorities in the South West regarding Investigations framework and guidance for Members to consider. This is detailed in Appendix 1.

The benchmarking review found that Teignbridge’s arrangements document and how we conduct investigations similar in nature to how other Council’s operate. This element is optional within our guidance so it is for the Committee to review and determine if any revisions are required. The Committee have ownership of the Arrangements Document so can make revisions to it without Full Council approval.

5. Implications, Risk Management and Climate Change Impact

Implications and risks are covered on page 1 of the report.

4. Alternative Options

This is the opportunity to review the current process; Members do not have to recommend changes to the process. The legal requirement is that we have a process. Any changes to the adopted Code of Conduct itself have to be referred to Full Council for approval.

5. Conclusion

The Committee is asked to receive the report and the information contained within and consider whilst deliberating the issue.

Appendix 1: Benchmarking Investigations Procedure

Local Authority	Investigations Process in place?	Who can be appointed to investigate?	Operational elements of investigation?	Interviews or further information	Report Template or Framework?	Review/QA of the report?
Teignbridge	Yes	Anyone external to the Council, appointed by Monitoring Officer	Decided by the appointed investigator	Optional – for the investigator to determine.	No	No
Cornwall	Yes	Anyone appointed by the Monitoring Officer	Decided by the appointed investigator	Optional – for the investigator to determine.	No – other than coming to a conclusion on the breach.	No
Plymouth	Yes	Anyone appointed by the Monitoring Officer	Decided by the appointed investigator	Optional – for the investigator to determine	No	No
South Hams and West Devon	No	Monitoring Officer or someone appointed by them	Process refers to an Investigation Hearing, where interviews will take place and a report from the investigating officer is considered. Report template (4 bullet points what the report will set out).			
Torbay	Yes - Mentions guidance from the Standard Board of England	Not specified.	Refers to guidance from the Standard Board of England.	Process refers to a Hearing Sub Committee, where interviews will take place.		By the Standards Sub committee in preparation for a hearing
Exeter	Not published					
East Devon	Yes	Monitoring Officer or someone on their behalf	Not specified	Not specified	Not specified	Not specified
Mid Devon	Yes	Anyone appointed by the Monitoring Officer	Decided by the appointed investigator	Optional – for the investigator to determine.	Yes	Not specified
North Devon		Monitoring Officer or someone appointed by them	Decided by the appointed investigator	Optional – for the investigator to determine.	No – other than coming to a conclusion on the breach.	Not specified

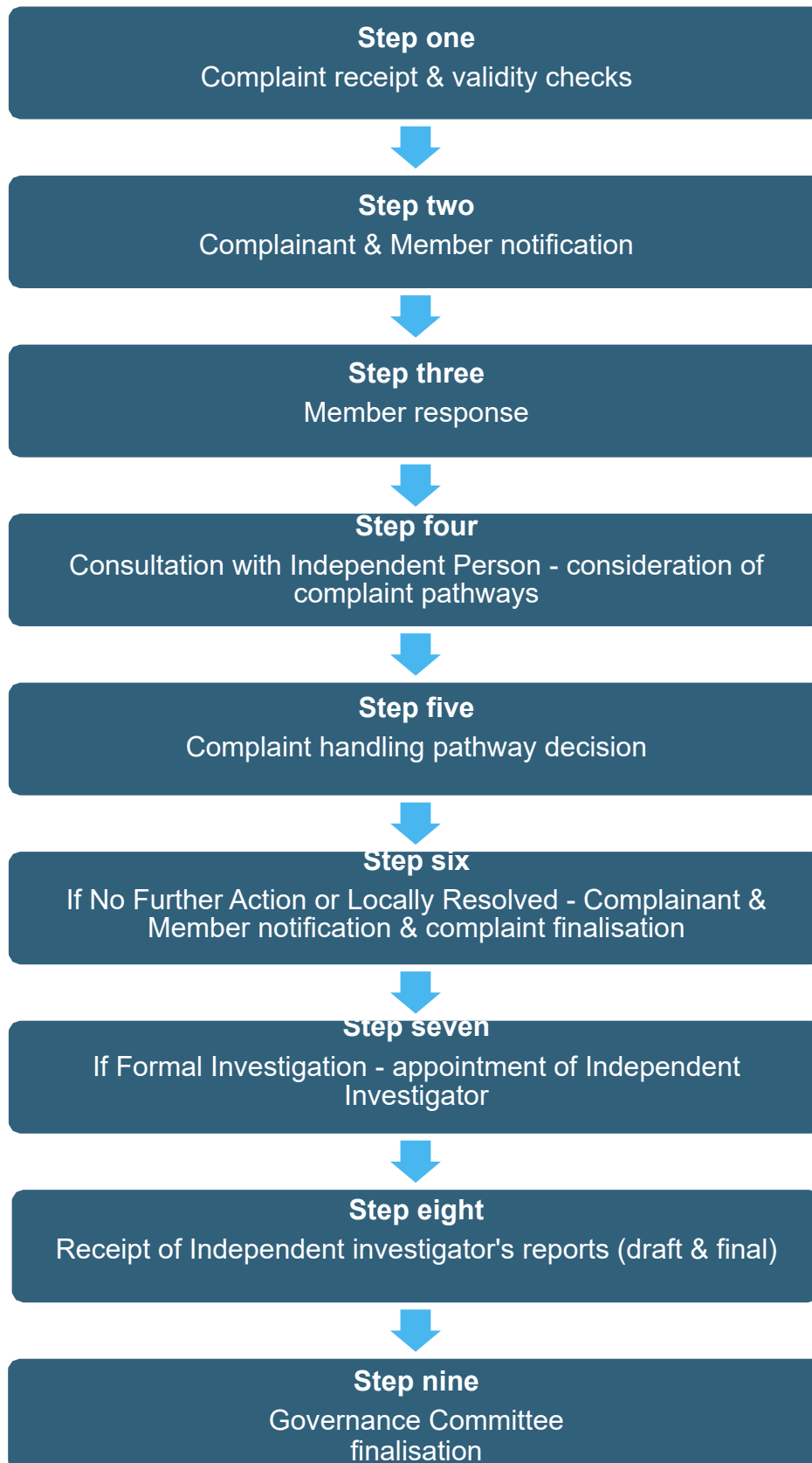
Local Authority	Investigations Process in place?	Who can be appointed to investigate?	Operational elements of investigation?	Interviews or further information	Report Template or Framework?	Review/QA of the report?
Torrige	Not published					
Devon County	Yes	Anyone appointed by the Monitoring Officer	Investigation procedure in place	For the investigator to determine but referred to in the procedure.	No	Investigation progress reviewed every 2 weeks. Monitoring Officer to review draft report.
Somerset Council	Yes	Anyone external to the Council, appointed by Monitoring Officer	Decided by the appointed investigator	For the investigator to determine.	Yes.	No

References:

1. Teignbridge Arrangements for Dealing with Standards complaints
2. Cornwall - [Code of Conduct complaints - Cornwall Council](#)
3. Plymouth - [Arrangements for dealing with standard complaints](#)
- 22 4. South Hams - [How will a complaint be dealt with? | South Hams District Council](#)
5. West Devon - [How will a complaint be dealt with? | West Devon Borough Council](#)
6. Torbay - [LOCAL ASSESSMENT OF COMPLAINTS ABOUT THE CONDUCT OF A MEMBER](#)
7. East Devon - [How to make a complaint about the conduct of a district councillor](#)
8. Mid Devon – Appendix K of the Constitution [Mid Devon District Council Constitution \(January 2026\)](#)
9. North Devon - [The Monitoring Officer and complaints about councillors | North Devon Council](#)
10. Devon County Council - [Protocol for dealing with investigations into standards allegations under the Localism Act 2011 - Democracy in Devon](#)
11. Somerset Council - [Complaints about Councillors](#)

Complaints Process

For Members *[approved Full Council 28 November 2023]*



Notes

Overview

- The aim of Teignbridge District Council's complaints process for Members, is to provide a fair, transparent, reasonable & proportionate approach to recording & resolving complaints made about Members.
- The intent of the complaints process is to provide the most appropriate resolution at the earliest opportunity, & proportionality should include consideration of public cost against potential outcome.
- In most instances, the process will be followed as a step-by-step. In instances where a variation of the process is required to meet the circumstances of a specific complaint, the variation(s) to process and the associated rationale will be recorded and the parties involved notified.
- Any reference to 'in writing' includes email but does not include any electronic text or messaging services.
- The Council aims to make an initial response to all complaints within 14 days and regularly thereafter as appropriate to keep the complainant informed
- The complaints process is owned by the Council's Monitoring Officer.

Step one – complaint receipt & validity checks

- On receipt of a written complaint/allegation, administrative checks will be made to ensure that complaint is valid & that it meets published submission criteria.
- If it does, the Monitoring Officer will then undertake further validity checks including legal checks & a prima facie assessment as to whether the Code of Conduct applies and **may** have been breached.
- Receipt of the complaint will be acknowledged within 5 working days.

Step two – complaint & member notification

- If the complaint is invalid, or if it is assessed that it is unlikely that the Code of Conduct has been breached, the Monitoring Officer will reply to the complainant in writing to inform them that no further action will be taken with an explanation as to why.
- At this stage, the complaint is finalised. Within the outcome notification, the complainant will be provided information on any appeal process.
- The Monitoring Officer will also notify the subject Member in writing for their information only.
- If the complaint is valid & it is assessed that there **may** be a breach of the Code of Conduct, the Monitoring Officer will inform the subject Member in writing of the details of the complaint, including those of the complainant (unless confidentiality has been agreed). The Member will be asked to respond in writing.
- The Monitoring Officer will write to the Complainant to confirm that the complaint is being taken forward.

Step three – Member response

- Within 14 days of complaint notification, the subject Member of the complaint will either:
 - o Respond in writing to the Monitoring Officer, with documentation as appropriate,
or
 - o Confirm to the Monitoring Officer that they do not wish to provide a written response to the complaint.

Step four – consultation with independent person & consideration of complaint pathway

- After receipt of the Member's response, the Monitoring Officer will consider the information along with such as any Human Rights and or other material aspects, & consult with the Independent Person to help inform the decision about which complaint handling pathway is most appropriate. A record of the consultation will be kept on file.
- The three complaint handling pathways are:
 - No Further Action (NFA)
 - Local Resolution (LR)
 - Formal Investigation (FI)

Step five – complaint handling pathway decision

- After consultation with the Independent Person, the Monitoring Officer will decide which complaint handling pathway is the most appropriate.
- Should the Monitoring Officer assess that the complaint **may** include criminal activity, the Monitoring Officer will consider a referral to the police or other external authority as appropriate.
- If it is assessed that such a referral is appropriate, the Monitoring Officer will **brief** the Chair of the Governance Committee prior to the referral, unless urgent.
- It should be highlighted that the complaint handling decision is a prima facie one, and the choice of pathway does not indicate any presumption that the matter will be found proven, or otherwise.
- In the event that the complaint or aspects of it are referred to the Police for investigation the Monitoring Officer may adjourn this process. In that instance the Complainant will be advised.

Step six – no further action or local resolution

- Where it is decided that No Further Action is required, the Monitoring Officer will notify both the Complainant & the subject Member of the outcome in writing.
- At this stage, the complaint is finalised. Within the outcome notification, the complainant will be provided information on any appeal process.
- Where it is decided that Local Resolution is the most appropriate complaint handling pathway, the Monitoring Officer will manage this, working with Group Leaders where appropriate.
- At the conclusion of the Local Resolution process, the Monitoring Officer will notify both the Complainant & the subject Member of the outcome in writing.
- At this stage, the complaint is finalised. Within the outcome notification, the complainant will be provided information on any appeal process.

Step seven – formal investigation

- Where the complaint handling pathway decision is Formal Investigation, the Monitoring Officer will **brief** the Chair of the Governance Committee of the decision.
- The Monitoring Officer will then appoint an Independent Investigator as appropriate and having applied due diligence.

Step eight – receipt of independent investigator’s reports

- At the conclusion of a Formal Investigation, the independent investigator will submit a draft report to the Monitoring Officer.
- The Monitoring Officer will send the draft report to the subject Member and complainant for the Member to review and respond as appropriate. The Member should respond to the Monitoring Officer in writing within 14 days.
- The Monitoring Officer will also send a copy of the draft report to the independent person, for information only. No response from the independent person is required.
- Following response from the member, the Monitoring Officer will send the Member’s response plus any other comments back to the independent investigator in writing. The Investigating Officer will then produce a final report.
- The independent investigator’s final report will be submitted to the Monitoring Officer.

Step nine – Governance Committee finalisation

- The Monitoring Officer will submit the final report, to the Governance Committee with recommendations and/or comments, for consideration and action, and sanction(s) if appropriate.
- At the complaint’s conclusion, the Monitoring Officer will inform/confirm both the complainant & the subject Member of the outcome in writing.
- The Monitoring Officer will also inform the independent person, for information only.
- Within the outcome notification, the complainant will be provided information on any appeal process.

Appeals process

- At the conclusion of the complaint (at steps 2, 6 or 9), the Monitoring Officer will inform the complainant & Member of the outcome in writing. That notification will include information regarding the appeals process.
- This information should include:
 - o That any appeal must be received in writing within 14 days of the complaint outcome notification being made
 - o That to be valid, any appeal must specify the reasons for the appeal, together with the desired outcome of the appeal
 - o That any appeal should be addressed to the Monitoring Officer. In cases where the Monitoring Officer is subject of the complaint, an appropriate alternative person will be named
- On receipt of an appeal, the Monitoring Officer will:
 - o Consider the matter
 - o Consult with a further independent person unconnected with the original complaint
 - o Respond in writing to the complainant within 28 days, providing either an outcome to the appeal, or detailing what further action will be taken.

Arrangements for dealing with Standards Complaints

1. Introduction

The Council has a duty to promote and maintain high standards of conduct for its elected and voting co-opted members and have arrangements in place to investigate complaints of alleged breaches of the Code of Conduct, pursuant to the Localism Act 2011.

In doing so, the Council has adopted a Code of Conduct for members, which is available to at [Section 10 a Members code of Conduct](#). Alternatively, you can request a copy by emailing monitoringofficer@teignbridge.gov.uk.

The Code of Conduct sets out the standards of behaviour expected by all members and voting co-opted members of the Council to observe whenever they are carrying out Council business. It also includes provisions for registering and declaring pecuniary and other interests.

The Council is also responsible for dealing with Complaints regarding parish or town council members in the Teignbridge area who have alleged to have breached their Code of Conduct. Codes of Conduct of their choosing have been adopted by town and parish Councils in the Teignbridge area. These are available on their websites or from the Parish Clerk.

These arrangements set out how to make a Complaint that an elected or voting co-opted member of the Council or a town or parish Member has failed to comply with their Council's Code of Conduct. It also sets out how the Council will deal with a Complaint alleging a breach of the Code of Conduct.

In dealing with Complaints, the Council will be fair to both You and the Subject Member and aim to progress matters in accordance with the timescales set out in these arrangements. Where the Council is unable to meet the timescales and where there is a significant delay in progressing the Complaint, the parties will be updated accordingly.

Complaints will be handled in the strictest confidence at all times.

These arrangements are designed to be proportionate, timely and fair to both sides. Its overriding objective is to seek to provide pragmatic local solutions to local problems wherever possible and to avoid costly and time-consuming formal investigations. The handling of Complaints will be undertaken on the basis of what is reasonable and proportionate, having regard to all relevant issues including the detail of the Complaint, an objective assessment of the significance of the alleged breaches, the public interest, and the cost to the public purse of administering the Complaints process, both for

individual Complaints and overall. All steps within the Complaints Process are underpinned by the public interest.

The arrangements for dealing with Code of Conduct Complaints must provide for the Council to appoint at least one Independent Person, who's views must be sought before taking a decision on an allegation which it had decided shall be investigated, and who's views may be sought by the Monitoring Officer at any other stage, or by a Subject Member.

The Council has a duty to ensure there is no conflict of interest with officers when undertaking standards investigations. If a conflict of interest is identified, it will be determined in consultation with an Independent Person whether the matter should be dealt with by an alternative officer and a written record of their decision will be filed.

The Council has a clear and straightforward public interest test as set out in at Annex 1 which is applied by the Monitoring Officer when considering Complaints.

2. Definitions/Glossary of Terms

The following terms used throughout these arrangements are defined as below.

Appeals Validity Check: as set out in section 19 of these arrangements.

Assessment Criteria: as set out at section 11 of these arrangements.

Code of Conduct / Code: The Councils Member's Code of Conduct which has been adopted by the relevant Council.

Committee: The Governance Committee appointed by the Council. The oversight of Complaints against members sits with the Committee. The Committee is a group of members appointed by full council to help maintain and promote high ethical standards. The Committee will invite the Independent Person(s) to attend all meetings, and their views are sought and taken into consideration before the Committee takes any decision on consideration of an investigation report on whether the Subject Member's conduct constitutes a failure to comply with the Code of Conduct and as to any action to be taken following a finding of failure to comply with it.

Complainant / You: – The person or people who has submitted the Complaint or Appeal to the Monitoring Officer about the Subject Member.

Complaint: A complaint received by the Monitoring Officer from a Complainant through the Complaints Process for members.

Complaints Process: the complaints process adopted by Teignbridge District Council for the investigation of Code of Conduct Complaints.

Council: the relevant authority in which the Subject Member is a member of.

Independent investigator: A person, independent from the Council who has been appointed by the Monitoring Officer to undertake a formal investigation into allegations of a breach of the Code.

Independent Person: A person appointed under the Localism Act 2011 in an advisory and consultative role in relation to Complaints and who's views are before a decision on a Complaint is made. The Monitoring Officer may also seek the views of an Independent Person at any stage and on any aspect of a Complaint. The Independent Person will also provide, on request, procedural advice to the Subject Member and/or provide support to the Committee.

Any view given by the Independent Person will be recorded by the Monitoring Officer and kept on file. The Monitoring Officer has discretion to share the view provided by the Independent Person with the Complainant and/or Subject Member, subject to confirmation from the Independent and in line with data protection requirements.

LGSCO: the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman is an independent, impartial service that investigates complaints about local authorities, social care providers, and other public bodies in England where a person has suffered injustice due to maladministration.

Member: an elected or voting co-opted member of an authority in which falls within the Teignbridge area.

Monitoring Officer: a senior Officer of Teignbridge District Council who has statutory responsibility for maintaining the register of councillor's interests and who is responsible for administering the process in respect of Complaints of member misconduct. Reference to 'Monitoring Officer' shall include their nominated deputy or any other authorised officer, authorised by the Monitoring officer to carry out the duties of the Monitoring Officer under the Complaints Process. The Monitoring Officer can be contacted by emailing monitoringofficer@Teignbridge.gov.uk.

Officer: an employee of the Council.

Political Group Leader: the leader of the political party in which the Subject Member is assigned to. If the Subject Member is not aligned with any party, this will be the Leader of the Council.

Subject Member: The member against whom an allegation has been made.

Validity check: – as set out in section 8 of these arrangements.

3. How to make a Complaint

This section sets out how to submit a Complaint about a member of the Council.

All Complaints under the Complaints Process are required by law to be in writing. To ensure that we have all the information required to progress the Complaint, they must be made by submitting the Councils online complaint form.

We can provide assistance to you if you have a disability that prevents you from making a Complaint or makes it difficult for you to put your Complaint in writing and you have no other assistance available to you. We can also help if English is not your first language. If you have any questions or difficulties completing the complaint form, please contact the Monitoring Officer by emailing monitoringofficer@teignbridge.gov.uk.

Please note that the Council does not usually investigate anonymous Complaints, unless there is a clear public interest in doing so. Please refer to section 6 for further information on anonymous Complaints.

The Monitoring Officer will review all Complaints received and they will be handled in the strictest confidence at all times.

4. When should you use this Process?

The Complaints Process is for the consideration of potential breaches of the Code of Conduct and cannot be used to investigate matters outside of this scope. Matters that cannot be investigated or considered through the Complaints Process include (but not limited to);

- Complaints made against a Council as a whole will be rejected and need to be referred to the Council in question for consideration under their own procedures. The Monitoring Officer can tell you who to contact.
- Complaints about people employed by the Council or a decision made by an Officer of the Council.
- Complaints about the way the Council conducts or records its meetings.
- Complaints about the way the Council has or has not done something. This might be a matter for the LGSCO if the Council has not dealt with the matter properly and it has not been resolved locally.
- Complaints about someone who is no longer a member or conduct that took place when they were not acting as a in their official capacity.

- Complaints about decisions relating to planning or licensing. These matters should be challenged by way of judicial review.
- Complaints in respect of clerks to Councils. As they are employees of their respective authorities, the correct Council's policy will need to be followed for this.

5. What to include in your Complaint?

It is very important that anyone making a Complaint gives as much detail as possible as a Complaint containing insufficient information may result in it being rejected.

All Complaints will need to clearly set out and include the following information;

- The name of the Member the Complaint is about.
- Details of what the Member has done that you believe breaches the Code of Conduct. You should be specific, wherever possible, about exactly what you are alleging the Member said or did.
- The sections of the Code which you believe they have breached. Please note that whilst the Nolan Principles form the basis on which the Code has been developed, they do not necessarily give rise to a breach in themselves. As such, the relevant section of the Code should be set out rather than reference to the Nolan Principle in which you believe has not been followed.
- The dates of the alleged incidents. If you cannot provide exact dates, there must be a general timeframe.
- Where a Complaint relates to conduct which took place over 6 months prior to the Complaint, the delay for making the Complaint must be explained. The Monitoring Officer may reject it in absence of reasonable explanation.
- Details of any witnesses to the alleged conduct, including their contact details.
- All relevant background information and supporting information and/or evidence.
- What action you think would be appropriate to resolve your Complaint, with regard to the range of sanctions in section 17 of these arrangements.

Potential Complainants are encouraged to explore whether the matter can be resolved without the need to submit a formal Complaint under the Complaints Process. Please

speak to the Monitoring Officer who will be happy to advise you on the options available to you.

6. Anonymity and Confidentiality

As a matter of fairness and natural justice, anonymous Complaints will ordinarily be rejected but the Council may investigate an anonymous Complaint on an exceptional basis, such as if there is a clear public interest in doing so. Likewise, if an anonymous Complaint suggests that a criminal offence has been committed, the Monitoring Officer will determine whether it is appropriate to refer the Complaint to the police or some other relevant body.

You must therefore provide their name, address and, where possible, their email address.

If you want to keep your name and address or email confidential, you should indicate this in the space provided on the Complaint form and a reason why this should be honoured.

The request will be considered by the Monitoring Officer prior to the Subject Member being notified that a Complaint has been made, but anonymity cannot be guaranteed. In consideration of the request, the Monitoring Officer will consider the following;

- Whether the Complainant reasonably believes that they, or those connected to them, will be at risk of harm if their identity is disclosed.
- Whether the Complainant is alleging harassment, bullying, or victimisation.
- That the Complainant is reasonably concerned about the consequences to their employment, or those connected to them if their identity is disclosed.
- That the Complainant, or somebody closely connected to them, suffers from a medical condition and there is evidence of medical risks associated with their identity being disclosed or confirmation from an appropriate medical professional that that is the case.

If the Monitoring Officer decides to refuse a request for confidentiality, they will offer You the option to withdraw the Complaint, rather than proceed with your identity being disclosed. Complainants must recognise that maintaining confidentiality may hinder the effectiveness of any investigation.

7. Receipt of a complaint

Receipt of the Complaint will be acknowledged within 5 working days, with details about how it will be dealt with and in what timescales.

The Monitoring Officer will consider requests for confidentiality pursuant to section 6 of these arrangements.

The Monitoring Officer may carry out preliminary enquiries and contact You for clarification of your Complaint, or further information, if necessary, prior to carrying out the validity check. Where additional information is requested but not provided within 10 working days of the request the Monitoring Officer may close the Complaint. You will be notified of its closure.

Once the Monitoring Officer is satisfied that they have all the required information, the validity check will be carried out.

8. The Validity check – Can we deal with this complaint

A validity check is carried out to establish whether or not the Monitoring Officer can deal with the Complaint.

The Validity Check is a jurisdictional test and the Monitoring Officer will ask the following;

- Is the Subject Member a member of a Council which falls under the jurisdiction of these arrangements?
- Was the Subject Member a member of the Council at the time of the alleged conduct?
- Was the Subject Member acting, or could reasonably be perceived to be so acting in their official capacity as a member at the time of the alleged misconduct?
- If proven, would the alleged conduct amount to a breach of the Code of Conduct under which the Subject Member was operating at the time. The Complaint will have to demonstrate reasonable grounds for believing that the Subject Member has breached the Code of Conduct.

If the answer to any of the above criteria is 'no', the Complaint is considered invalid and cannot be investigated as a breach of the Code. You will be informed that no further action can be taken in respect of the Complaint and the Monitoring Officer will advise you of any relevant appeals process.

9. Notifying the Subject Member

Once a Complaint has passed the Validity Check and it is assessed that there may be a breach of the Code, the Monitoring Officer will notify You that the Complaint has been accepted as a formal complaint and notify the Subject Member and supply a full copy of the Complaint to them. They will be asked to respond to the Complaint in writing within 14 days of being notified. The Monitoring Officer has the discretion to extend this timeframe in exceptional circumstances.

The Subject Member, depending on the matter may also be asked to provide their views on informal resolution and will be notified that they may seek the views of an Independent Person at any stage of the Complaints Process.

Where appropriate, the Monitoring Officer may also contact the clerk of the relevant town or parish Council and such other persons as the Monitoring Officer feels appropriate to provide additional information.

The Subject Member will either;

- Respond in writing to the Monitoring Officer, with documentation if appropriate; or
- Confirm to the Monitoring Officer that they do not wish to provide a written response to the Complaint.

Failure to respond to the Monitoring Officer may be considered as unwillingness to cooperate with a Code of Conduct investigation contrary to paragraph 8.2 of the Council's Code of Conduct.

There may be rare occasions upon which a Subject Member will not be notified that a Complaint has been made against them. In deciding not to notify the Subject Member, the Monitoring Officer will weigh up different factors and consult with the Independent Person when reaching this conclusion.

Once the Subject Members response has been received, or the 14 days has passed since the Subject Member was asked to respond, the Complaint will be considered as per step 4 of the Complaints Process.

10. The Assessment Process

Before making any decision regarding the Complaint, the Complaint, any representations made by the Subject Member and any additional information acquired will be referred to an Independent Person who will provide their views on the consideration of the Complaint. The Monitoring Officer considers the views put forward by the Independent Person before making a decision.

The Independent Person and the Monitoring Officer will use the assessment criteria set out below to form a view on how the Complaint should be dealt with.

11. Assessment Criteria – Should we deal with this complaint?

The Monitoring Officer and the Independent Person will apply the following assessment criteria to decide what action, if any to take in respect of the Complaint. Your Complaint will usually be rejected at this stage if, in the opinion of the Monitoring Officer, any of the following criteria applies.

Assessment Criteria;

1. The Complaint does not contain sufficient evidence to demonstrate a potential breach of the Code.
2. The Complaint is a 'repeat complaint', unless supported by new or further evidence substantiating or indicating that the Complaint is exceptionally serious or significant.
3. The Complaint is by one member against another which does not go beyond the greater allowance for robust political debate (but not personal abuse), bearing in mind the right to freedom of expression.
4. The Complaint in the view of the Monitoring Officer is trivial, malicious, politically motivated or 'tit for tat' and therefore does not disclose significantly serious potential breaches of the code.
5. The Complainant is unreasonably persistent or malicious or is considered vexatious in line with the Council's vexatious complaints policy.
6. It would otherwise be inappropriate to expend the Council's resources on determining the Complaint having regard to the circumstances of the Complaint, any previous related complaints, and the public interest – see annex 1 for information on public interest.
7. That a simple apology, training or conciliation would be the appropriate response to the Complaint.
8. A reasonable offer of local resolution is offered by the Subject Member but rejected by the Complainant.
9. The Complaint is the same or substantially the same (and involves the same event or set of circumstances) as a complaint which has previously been considered whether submitted by the same Complainant or some other person and where no new evidence has been provided.

10. The Complaint is the same or substantially the same (and involves the same event or set of circumstances) as a complaint which has been the subject of an investigation or other action and there is nothing more to be gained by further action being taken.
11. The behaviour that is the subject of the Complaint has already been addressed with the Subject Member.
12. The alleged misconduct being complained of happened more than 6 months ago (or 6 months has passed since the Complainant became aware of the alleged behaviour) and it would be unfair, unreasonable or otherwise not in the public interest to pursue unless there are, in the Monitoring Officers opinion, exceptional circumstances which would warrant the Complaint begin progressed.
13. The circumstances have changed so much that there would be little benefit arising from an investigation or other action.
14. The Complaint is such that it is unlikely that an investigation will be able to come to a firm conclusion on the matter such as where there is no firm evidence on the matter.
15. The Complaint actually relates to dissatisfaction with a Council's decision rather than the specific conduct of an individual.
16. The Complaint is about a member who is seriously ill or deceased.

12. Outcomes following assessment

The Monitoring Officer may reach one of three decisions on an allegation:

- No further action should be taken.
- The matter should be dealt with through a process of informal resolution in the first instance.
- The matter should be referred for formal investigation.

If the Monitoring Officer considers that one or more of the Assessment Criteria applies to the Complaint, no further action will be taken, and it will be rejected.

If the Monitoring Officer decides that the matter should be dealt with through informal resolution or referred for formal investigation, the Complaint will progress to the relevant step of the Complaints Process.

On completion of this assessment, the Monitoring Officer will provide You with a decision as to the outcome and what action is to be taken, if any. The Subject Member and their Political Group Leader will be similarly informed. Where the complaint involves a parish or town council member, the Clerk to that council will be informed.

Where there is disagreement between the Monitoring Officer and Independent Person on how to deal with the Complaint, full details of how the final decision has been made will be kept on file.

The decision will normally be sent within 15 working days of receipt of the Subject Members comments pursuant to step 3 of the Complaints Process however where a decision is unable to be made within that timeframe, the You and Subject Member will be updated accordingly, and a new time frame will be provided.

13. Referral to the Police or other regulatory authorities

If the Complaint identifies criminal conduct or a breach of other regulations by any person, the Monitoring Officer may refer the matter to the Police or other prosecuting or regulatory authority, in addition to any action taken pursuant to the Code.

In such circumstances, it may not be appropriate to continue to progress the Complaint until the conclusion of the Police investigation unless there has been confirmation with the relevant police contacts that it would not prejudice their investigations.

Where the Monitoring Officer considers it appropriate to refer a Complaint to the Police or other external authority, they will inform the chair of the Committee of the decision.

14. Informal resolution

An informal resolution is a more proportionate way of dealing with relatively minor allegations, one-off incidents or underlying disagreements between individuals. Where possible and appropriate, the Monitoring Officer will try to resolve the Complaint informally without the need for a formal investigation.

The decision to resolve the Complaint informally will normally be an alternative to a referral for investigation, and the purpose will not be to determine whether or not the Subject Member has breached the Code. In such cases, the Monitoring Officer will make it clear to the parties involved that no conclusion has been reached about what happened and no decision has been made as to whether or not the Subject Member has breached the Code of Conduct.

Matters which the Monitoring Officer might consider appropriate for informal resolution may include (but not limited to);

- Less serious Complaints.
- When the Subject Member accepts that there are grounds for the Complaint and offers an apology.
- Complaints containing allegations and retaliatory allegations from the same members particularly where this is to such an extent that it becomes difficult to conduct the business of the Council.
- Complaints where the public interest in conducting an investigation does not justify the costs of an investigation.
- Where informal resolution provides the best opportunity to resolve the issue, prevent any similar issues arising in the future and promote good governance.
- Less serious Complaints where the Subject Member wishes to put their actions right or where it would be beneficial to remind a Subject Member of the requirements of the Code of Conduct, matters that should be included on their Register of Interests or declarations of interest at meetings.
- Where there is a general breakdown of relationships where other action such as mediation might help, including those between members and Officers, as evidenced by a pattern of allegations of minor disrespect, harassment or bullying to such an extent that it becomes difficult to conduct the business of the Council.
- Where the issue appears to be in the political arena and therefore appropriate for referral to a leader(s) of a political group to deal with or the clerk of the relevant town or parish Council.
- Where it is apparent that there is a lack of experience or understanding of the Code and relevant procedures by the Subject Member and training is required.
- Where the same particular part of the Code has been breached by many members, indicating poor understanding of the Code and the Council's procedures and/or protocols.

Informal resolution can include (but not limited to) the following actions;

- The Subject Member offering an apology;
- The Subject Member accepting their conduct was unacceptable;
- The Subject Member providing an explanation to the Complainant of the circumstances surrounding the Complaint;
- The Subject Member agreeing to attend relevant training or to take part in a mentoring process;
- The Monitoring Officer arranging mediation or conciliation between the Subject Member and the Complainant;
- The Monitoring Officer referring the complaint to the Political Group Leader of the Subject Member.
- Any other steps (not including investigation) which appear appropriate in resolving the Complaint.

Where the Monitoring Officer has decided that informal resolution is the most appropriate way forward, the resolution put forward must be resolved to the satisfaction of the Monitoring Officer.

Where the informal resolution is accepted by You then the matter will be closed, and the Monitoring Officer will confirm this in writing to You and the Subject Member. If You are not willing to accept the informal resolution put forward, the Monitoring Officer has the discretion to decide whether the Complaint warrants any further action.

The Subject Member should comply with the recommended actions where relevant within 4 weeks of the decision notice being sent.

At the conclusion of the local resolution process, the Monitoring Officer will notify both You and Subject Member of the outcome of the Complaint and that there is no further action to be taken. You will also be notified of any relevant appeals process.

If the Subject Member fails to comply with the informal resolution put forward, the Complaint will, in the first instance be referred to the relevant political group leader. If action has not been complied with within 4 weeks after this, the matter will be considered by the Monitoring Officer and the Independent Person as to whether a finding can be made on the Complaint with or without a formal investigation. Informal resolution remains open to the parties throughout the Complaints Process even if a Complaint has proceeded to the formal resolution stage.

15. Formal Investigation criteria

Where the Monitoring Officer, in consultation with the Independent Person decides that a Complaint merits a formal investigation, and that formal investigation is warranted in the public interest to establish the facts, they will appoint an Independent Investigator. Complaints will normally be referred for investigation where there are potentially serious breaches of the Code and/or where it would be in the public interest to formally investigate. The Monitoring Officer will need to make a judgement balancing the resources of the Council and the scale and nature of the Complaint.

The Monitoring Officer will let all those involved know that this is the case and the process that will be followed, including the Subject Member's Political Group Leader. Where the complaint involves a parish or town council member, the Clerk to that Council will be informed.

The Independent Investigator will follow any of the Council's processes or guidance on the investigation of Complaints. The Independent Investigator will follow the principles of proportionality and the cost-effective use.

The Independent Investigator will:

1. Decide whether to conduct interviews or invite statements.
2. Decide who to interview (by phone or in person at the Independent Investigator's discretion).
3. Ask for relevant supporting documentation from any of the relevant parties.

Whilst the investigation will be undertaken as expeditiously as reasonably practicable, it is not possible to specify a timescale within which the investigation must be concluded.

At the end of a formal investigation, the Independent Investigator will submit a draft report to the Monitoring Officer who will send the report to You and the Subject Member to review and respond as appropriate and within 14 days. The Monitoring Officer will also send a copy of the draft report to the Independent Person for their information only.

Following receipt of response from You and Subject Member, the Monitoring Officer will then refer back to the Independent Investigator who will issue a final report.

The Monitoring Officer will submit the final report with any recommendations or comments to the Committee so that a decision as to any action or sanction to be imposed as appropriate can be made.

16. Discontinuance of an investigation

The Independent Investigator should provide an update and/or regular progress reports on the investigation to the Monitoring Officer. Updates on progress may be provided by the Independent Investigator to the You or Subject Member, where requested.

At any point during the investigation the Independent Investigator may refer the matter back to the Monitoring Officer if they believe that the matter may be resolved without a complete investigation, or that the Complaint should be rejected. The Monitoring Officer will, in consultation with the Independent Person, determine next steps.

The Independent Investigator will be asked to produce a summary report if the Monitoring Officer agrees that the investigation should not continue. The Monitoring Officer will not be required to automatically share this report but will consider its release to You and the Subject Member on a case-by-case basis in line with data protection requirements.

17. Available Sanctions for breaches to standards

Where a Subject Member is found to have breached the Code of Conduct the sanctions set out below are available to the Monitoring Officer and the Committee as appropriate. There are limitations on the potential outcomes to standards complaints and to the potential sanctions where a Subject Member is found to have breached the code. In relation to the town or parish Councils in the area, only recommendations of a particular sanction can be provided, but the Monitoring Officer or the Committee do not have the power to enforce compliance.

It is important to note that the Council does not have the power to suspend or disqualify a Subject Member or to withdraw their members' allowances. In addition, neither the Committee nor the Monitoring Officer have the power to enforce compliance with any sanctions decided. If a Subject Member fails to comply with any sanction, this may constitute a further breach of the Code of Conduct. As such, consideration should always be given to setting a clearly defined time period for any sanction to be complied with and to set out any action or further sanction, if any may be undertaken if the sanction is not complied with.

Possible sanctions that are available include (but not limited to);

- To formally report the findings to full council for information and noting or in the case of members of a town or parish council, formally report to the members of that council for information.
- To recommend to full council that the Subject Member should be issued with a formal censure (such as the issue of an unfavourable opinion or judgement or reprimand) motion.

- To require the Subject Member to provide an apology at the next full council meeting.
- To request the Subject Member remove any social media content which led to the Complaint.
- To recommend to the Subject Member's political group leader (or in the case of ungrouped members recommend to full council or to committees) that the Subject Member is removed from any or all committees or sub committees of the Council.
- To recommend to the Subject Member's political group leader (or in the case of ungrouped Members, the Leader of the Council) that the Subject Member is removed from particular portfolio responsibilities or from all outside appointments to which they have been appointed or nominated.
- To require the Subject Member to attend training.
- To place such restrictions on the Subject Member's access to staff, buildings or parts of buildings of the Council's offices or other premises (with the exception of meeting rooms when attending full council or committees) which may be reasonable in the circumstances.
- To withdraw facilities provided to the Subject Member by the Council, such as a computer, website, and/or email and internet access, but only if the breach of the Code warrants such a sanction but must not prevent the Subject Member from carrying out their duties as a member. In this case, there would be a requirement to ensure constituents were represented and solutions needed to ensure this continued.
- To bar the Subject Member from the Council offices and put on single point of contact but only if the breach of the Code warrants such a sanction but must not prevent the Subject Member from carrying out their duties as a member.
- To recommend to full council to issue a press release or other form of publicity in respect of the findings of the Subject Member's conduct.

18. Appeals

At the conclusion of the Complaint, You, or the Subject Member may have a right to appeal the decision made.

A right of appeal is provided for at the conclusion of step two, step six and step nine.

Within 5 days of receiving your appeal, your request will be acknowledged along with details about how it will be dealt with and in what timescales.

The appeal will then be reviewed by the Monitoring Officer and an Independent Person unconnected with the original decision.

19. Appeals Validity Check

The Monitoring Officer, in consultation with the Independent Person will then carry out a validity check to establish whether or not the appeal is valid.

To be considered valid, the appeal must;

- Be submitted within 14 days of receipt of the decision letter.
- Set out substantive reasons why the appeal should be considered. Substantive reasons include;
 - Reasons which have not previously been provided to support the Complaint; together with
 - Any supporting evidence or documents which are relevant but which have not been previously provided.
- Confirm the desired outcome of the appeal.

The appeal will not be considered to be valid if it simply expresses disagreement with the decision without giving substantive reasons. Similarly, simply repeating the original Complaint will result in the request for review being rejected.

If the appeal does not meet the Appeals Validity Check the Monitoring Officer will confirm to You in writing that the appeal cannot be considered and the reasons for this.

20. How appeal will be dealt with

If the appeal passes the Appeals Validity Check, a review of the decision will be undertaken, unless there are compelling grounds not to do so, such as having regard to the substance of the request, the Independent Persons views and what is in the public interest.

However, the Monitoring Officer may make an exception where, in their absolute discretion and having regard to all the circumstances, they consider it reasonable and proportionate to agree to a review request that would otherwise not be accepted, for lack of new information or evidence. The expectation is that this discretion will only be exercised in exceptional circumstances.

You, and the Subject Member will be advised in writing whether the review request is accepted or rejected and, if rejected, the reasons for rejection.

Where any new information, documents or evidence is submitted in support of the appeal, in the interests of natural justice, the same will be sent to the Subject Member who will be asked to provide a written response within 14 days of being notified. The Subject Member will be made aware of their right to consult an Independent Person.

The Monitoring Officer, in consultation with the Independent Person will consider the appeal, any new documents/evidence.

The Assessment Criteria will be used to assess the appeal.

The Monitoring Officer may reach one of three decisions on an appeal:

- No further action should be taken.
- The matter should be dealt with through a process of informal resolution in the first instance.
- The matter should be referred for formal investigation.

On completion of the assessment, the Monitoring Officer will provide You with a decision as to the outcome of the appeal and what action is to be taken, if any. The Subject Member will be similarly informed.

If the Monitoring Officer considers that one or more of the Assessment Criteria applies to the Complaint, no further action will be taken, and the appeal will be rejected.

If the Monitoring Officer decides that the matter should be dealt with through informal resolution or referred for formal investigation, the Complaint will progress pursuant to the Complaints Process.

On conclusion of the appeal, the Monitoring Officer will inform both You and the Subject Member of their right to refer to LGSCO for review.

21. Discontinuing a Complaint

The Monitoring Officer may discontinue a Complaint where they consider it appropriate to do so in the following circumstances;

- where the Subject Member ceases to be a member for any reason;

- where the Complainant has not provided any additional information requested by the Monitoring Officer.

Where a Complaint is discontinued, the Monitoring Officer will write to You setting out the reasons for the decision.

Requests by You to withdraw Complaints will normally be granted but the Monitoring Officer will consider the following factors:

- Whether the public interest in taking action on the Complaint outweighs the Complainant's desire to withdraw it;
- Whether the Complaint is such that action can or should be taken on it without the Complainant's participation; and
- Whether there appears to be an identified underlying reason for the request to withdraw the Complaint; such as information to suggest that the Complainant may have been improperly pressured into withdrawing the Complaint or is at risk of such.

Even if a request to withdraw a Complaint is received, the Monitoring Officer may still refer it for determination under these arrangements or refer it to the appropriate professionals or body if, in the opinion of the Monitoring Officer, such action is reasonable and proportionate. This may be appropriate, for example, if the Complaint discloses potentially significant probity issues, possible criminal offences or safeguarding issues. If the request to withdraw is received after assessment has started the Monitoring Officer will determine whether the request will be agreed or the processing of the Complaint is to continue.

Annex 1

1. Public Interest

The Complaints Process for Members is crucial in achieving standards of conduct that meet public expectations. Through the Complaints Process, the Council aims to support proper decision making, the proper use of public resources, and to maintain public confidence in the Council and the democratic process itself. Undertaking investigations that do not support these wider benefits is not in the public interest.

It is important that the Council focuses investigations on matters that are serious and are capable of undermining the relationship between members and the public they serve. Limited resources should not be used to investigate matters which are trivial, or which have little or no impact upon the public.

The public in this context does not necessarily mean the entire population of Teignbridge. It may refer to a distinct section of the public such as a small community or interest group.

Where the Monitoring Officer is satisfied that a Complaint is supported by direct evidence which, substantiated, would suggest that a breach may have taken place, the public interest is considered in deciding whether a Complaint against the Subject Member can and should be investigated. The public interest is again considered during the course of an investigation to ensure that it should continue and when determining whether a matter should be referred to an Independent Investigator for further consideration.

Public interest is regarded as 'something that is of serious concern and benefit to the public'. It has also been held that the public interest does not mean what is of interest to the public, but what is in the interest of the public.

It is important that the Council focuses on investigations where the Complaint is serious and capable of undermining the relationship between members and the public they serve such as; corruption, bullying, damaging the Council's public image, bringing the Council into disrepute, or the misuse of power in public office.

When considering the public interest, the Monitoring Officer and Independent Person shall consider each of the following public interest factors set out below. These factors are not exhaustive and not all may be relevant in every case.

The weight attached to each of these factors, and the factors identified, will also vary according to the facts and merits of each case;

- The seriousness of the breach, for example, has the Subject Member brought the Council seriously into disrepute? The more serious the breach the more likely

investigation is required. Robust challenge is, however, part of a member's role and a balanced approach therefore needs to be taken.

- Has the Subject Member deliberately sought personal gain for themselves or another person? If there is evidence of this, it is likely that the Complaint will be investigated.
- Are the circumstances of the alleged breach such that a Subject Member has misused a position of trust or authority and caused harm to a person? If there is evidence of this, it is likely that the Complaint will be investigated.
- Is there evidence of previous similar behaviour on the part of the Subject Member? If so and the matter complained about is serious enough it is likely that the Complaint will be investigated.
- Is the alleged breach such that an investigation is required to maintain public confidence in elected members? If so it is likely that the Complaint will be investigated and referred for further hearing.
- Is investigation a proportionate response? Namely, would the cost of an investigation be regarded as excessive when weighed against any likely sanction?

2. Consideration

When taking any of the above factors into account, relevant considerations can include

- the circumstances surrounding the Complaint;
- when an incident, event or behaviour occurred, the extent to which the Subject Member was responsible for, or was to blame for, the alleged breach;
- whether the alleged conduct was premeditated and/or planned; and
- whether the alleged conduct has caused harm or impacted on another person, group or body.

Views expressed by You, or any other person affected by the alleged conduct, relating to the impact and effect should also be considered. Other considerations may be:

- whether there is evidence of previous similar behaviour on the part of the Subject Member;

- whether the Subject Member been the subject of any previous Complaints or investigations for a similar matter. Is the alleged conduct ongoing, repeated or is there evidence of escalating behaviour;
- whether the investigation is required to maintain public confidence in elected members within Teignbridge;
- whether investigation is a proportionate response. Consider whether it is likely that the breach would lead to a sanction being applied to the member and whether the use of resources in carrying out an investigation would be regarded as excessive, when weighed against any likely sanction.

Public interest should not be decided on the basis of resource alone, but this is a relevant consideration when making an overall assessment.

**Teignbridge District Council
Governance Committee
Tuesday 30th June 2026
Part i**

Code of Conduct Complaints Update

Purpose of Report

To provide an update on the Councillor Code of Conduct complaints received.

Recommendation(s)

The Committee RESOLVES to:

- (1) Receive the report and the contents within.

Financial Implications

No financial implications arise from this report.

Charlie Fisher – Democratic Services Manager & Monitoring Officer

Email: charlie.fisher@teignbridge.gov.uk

Legal Implications

No direct legal implications arise from this report. The Localism Act 2011 requires the Council to adopt a Code of Conduct which the Council complies with. Arrangements for the operation of the Code of Conduct are the responsibility of the Council.

Charlie Fisher – Democratic Services Manager & Monitoring Officer

Email: charlie.fisher@teignbridge.gov.uk

Risk Assessment

No direct risk implications arise from this report, Breach of the Code of Conduct is Corporate Risk and the Committee contributes to the mitigation of this risk. The report provides an opportunity to report on the complaints received in mitigating the risk and their wider role in the Governance of the Council.

Charlie Fisher – Democratic Services Manager & Monitoring Officer

Email: charlie.fisher@teignbridge.gov.uk

Environmental/ Climate Change Implications

No direct environment or climate change implications arise from this report.

Charlie Fisher – Democratic Services Manager & Monitoring Officer

Email: charlie.fisher@teignbridge.gov.uk

Report Author

Charlie Fisher – Democratic Services Manager & Monitoring Officer

charlie.fisher@teignbridge.gov.uk

Executive Member

Councillor Richard Keeling – Leader

Appendices

1. Code of Conduct Complaints Update

1. Introduction/Background

At the Governance Committee meeting on Thursday 2nd October 2025, the Committee agreed that a regular update of Code of Conduct complaints would be reported to the Committee.

2. Main Body

The update is appended to this report.

3. Implications, Risk Management and Climate Change Impact

Implications and risks are covered on page 1 of the report.

4. Alternative Options

There is no legal requirement to provide and publish an update, but it is considered good practice and benchmarked to other Local Authorities to share the complaints received to discharge of the Council's duties to promote and maintain high standards of conduct by Members.

5. Conclusion

The Committee is asked to receive the report and the information contained within.

Appendix 1: Member Code of Conduct Complaints received

Time period: 10th April – 19th June 2026

FS Reference	Date received	Complainant type	Subject Member(s)	Summary of complaint	Current stage	IP consulted?	Appealed?	Summary
FS-CASE-839257569	29 th April 2026	Member of the Public	Town/Parish Councillor	Behaviour at a Town Council meeting.	Closed	No	No	Invalid – would not amount to a breach.
FS-CASE-833114310	29 th April 2026	Town/Parish Councillor	District/Town Councillor	Unpleasant, aggressive and intimidating behaviour following the Annual Town Council meeting.	Stage 6 – Local Resolution	Yes		Offer of local resolution made to Subject Member has been declined. Subject Member has asked to speak to an Independent Person to help resolve complaint.
FS-CASE-83360944 9	30 th April 2026	Town/Parish Councillor	District/Town Councillor	Unpleasant, aggressive and intimidating behaviour following the Annual Town Council meeting.	Stage 6 – Local Resolution	Yes		Local resolution found and accepted by complainant. Group Leader informed.
2026/27 Municipal Year								
FS-CASE-838151558	15 th May 2026	District/Town Councillor	District/Town Councillor	Unpleasant, aggressive and intimidating behaviour following a Town Council meeting.	Stage 6 – Local Resolution	Yes		Offer of local resolution made to Subject Member for consideration. Group Leader informed.
FS-Case-839322769	19 th May 2026	County Councillor	District Councillor	Social media comments	Closed at Stage 2			Invalid – would not amount to a breach.

FS Reference	Date received	Complainant type	Subject Member(s)	Summary of complaint	Current stage	IP consulted?	Appealed?	Summary
FS-Case-839365110	19 th May 2026	Town Councillor	Town Councillor	Comments on a private WhatsApp group	Closed at Stage 2	IP consulted on the appeal	Yes	Initially determined as invalid as would not amount to a breach. Complainant appealed and IP was consulted, no change to original decision made.
FS-Case-841142270	26 th May 2026	Member of Public	District/Town Councillor	Social Media comments	Closed at Stage 2 – invalid.	IP consulted on the appeal	Yes	Initially determined as invalid as would not amount to a breach. Complainant appealed and IP was consulted, invalid appeal and no change to original decision made.
FS-Case-841142270	26 th May 2026	Member of Public	Town Councillor	Intimidation and harassment at an event, despite previous police and court involvement.	Stage 1			Complaint referred to the Police – Chair and Vice Chair of Committee informed. Complaint under review whilst liaising with Police.
FS-Case-844046181	4 th June 2026	Member of Public	N/A	Complaint against an Officer	Closed at Stage 2 - Invalid			Invalid – incorrect complaints channel used. Complainant informed of correct procedure to use.
FS-Case-844424326	5 th June 2026	Town Councillor	Town Councillor	Discrimination against Councillor at a Council meeting	Stage 3 – Subject Member Response sought.			Response from Subject Member sought.

FS Reference	Date received	Complainant type	Subject Member(s)	Summary of complaint	Current stage	IP consulted?	Appealed?	Summary
FS-Case-844732257	8 th June 2026	Town Councillor	Town Councillor	Discrimination against Councillor at a Council meeting.	Closed at Stage 1 – repeat complaint.			Repeated complaint, complainant advised that it will be closed and first complaint used.
FS-Case-848453562	16 th June 2026	District Councillor	District Councillor	Comments about another Member made during and after a Committee meeting.	Stage 1 - acknowledged			
FS-Case-849067300	18 th June 2026	District Councillor	District Councillor	Response to a question asked at a Committee meeting.	Stage 1 – acknowledged			
FS-Case-849119511	19 th June 2026	Other	Parish Councillor	Comments made to a member of the public regarding their garden.	Stage 1 – acknowledged			

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**Teignbridge District Council
Governance Committee
Tuesday 30th June 2026
Part i**

Annual Review of the Member Development Strategy

Purpose of Report

To review the Member Development Strategy.

Recommendation(s)

The Committee RESOLVES to:

- (1) To consider any further developments to the Member Development Programme and delegate authority to the Monitoring Officer to make any changes.
- (2) To consider the addition of Safeguarding Training to the annual programme of training.

Financial Implications

No financial implications arise from this report.

Charlie Fisher – Democratic Services Manager & Monitoring Officer

Email: charlie.fisher@teignbridge.gov.uk

Legal Implications

No direct legal implications arise from this report.

Charlie Fisher – Democratic Services Manager & Monitoring Officer

Email: charlie.fisher@teignbridge.gov.uk

Risk Assessment

No direct risk implications arise from this report. The report provides an opportunity to publish the training and briefing events that have taken place to aid transparency of the Council's activities.

Charlie Fisher – Democratic Services Manager & Monitoring Officer

Email: charlie.fisher@teignbridge.gov.uk

Environmental/ Climate Change Implications

No direct environment or climate change implications arise from this report.

Charlie Fisher – Democratic Services Manager & Monitoring Officer

Email: charlie.fisher@teignbridge.gov.uk

Report Author

Charlie Fisher – Democratic Services Manager & Monitoring Officer

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Executive Member

Councillor Richard Keeling – Leader of the Council.

Appendix

1. Member Development Strategy 2025

1. Introduction/Background

The Governance Committee has an ongoing role to review the Member Development Strategy and the delivery of Member Development. The Member Development Strategy was agreed by the Governance Committee in October 2025.

As part of the agreed Member Development Strategy, the Committee are provided with a regular update on the completed training, learning and development opportunities.

The report provides Members the opportunity to review the document and suggest any further changes.

2. Main Body

The Member Development Strategy and annual training programme has been operational since its adoption and this is the first year of its operation.

At its meeting on Tuesday 19th May 2026, Full Council agreed a recommendation that:

There be a comprehensive training programme for all members to be reviewed annually and rolled out for all new members. This would include training on the code of conduct, the different role of members and officers, effective decision-making, chairing skills and understanding the constitution.

The Council has an agreed Member Development Strategy and annual training programme, Members as part of this agenda item are asked to review the programme and consider further additions taking into account the recommendation from Full Council.

2.1 Safeguarding Training

The Governance Committee previously discussed DBS checks for Councillors at its meeting in January 2026. At the time it was agreed a further report would be taken to the Committee.

Since that meeting, the Monitoring Officer and the Strategy and Policy Manager reported to SLT on the implementation of DBS Checks. SLT recommended that the Governance Committee instead agree to hold regular safeguarding training to address their concerns rather than agree to operate a DBS scheme for Elected Members. Refresher safeguarding training has been arranged for Members to take place in July 2026. This was also reported to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee meeting on 16th June 2026 as part of the Safeguarding Delivery agenda item.

To consider:

- Whether to hold Safeguarding Training on an annual basis?
- If the training should be optional or mandatory for all Members?

3. Implications, Risk Management and Climate Change Impact

Implications and risks are covered on page 1 of the report.

4. Alternative Options

There is no legal requirement to have a Member Development Scheme, but it is considered good practice and helps to ensure Members have the skills and knowledge in carrying out their roles effectively.

5. Conclusion

The Committee is asked to review the report and consider any further developments to the Member Development Programme.

Teignbridge District Council – Member Development Strategy 2025

Introduction

The role of an Elected Member / Councillor is both exciting and highly rewarding. A Councillor is expected to carry out many roles ranging from community leader to taking on roles and responsibilities both within the Council and on outside bodies. A Councillor requires to balance the needs and interests of their community, their political party or group if they are associated with a party/group, and the Council as a whole, other Authorities they are part of and of course, their personal, family and any employment commitments.

The Member Development Strategy will aim to ensure that the Council provides the information and training opportunities needed to support Members and equips them to effectively carry out their roles.

Aim

- To ensure that every Member has access to the learning and development they need to perform their role and support their electorate.
- To ensure we provide learning and development to meet council legal obligations for members and also how we deliver functions as an organisation
- To outline the roles and responsibilities of Members in relation to their commitment to their professional development.
- To underpin and direct the resources required to deliver the Member Development Strategy.
- To promote the importance of learning and development for Members.

Commitment Statement

The Council's [People and Culture Strategy](#) highlights the Council's Investors in People accreditation and the Council's commitment to developing the potential of our people. Whilst not employees, this Strategy underpins these values and recognises that Elected Members are integral to ensuring that the strategic aims and objectives of the Council are met in terms of making decisions and delivering better outcomes for the residents of Teignbridge.

Teignbridge District Council is committed to the development of its Elected Members and has produced this Strategy to assist in equipping all Elected Members with the necessary skills and knowledge to meet current and future challenges.

Signed by:

Leader of the Council

Chief Executive

Roles and Responsibilities

All Elected Members

All Elected Members are responsible for:

- Identifying their own development needs in conjunction with Officers.
- Advising the Council of any accessibility or reasonable adjustments that the organisation may need to consider to aid delivery of learning e.g. Use of larger font, yellow paper, assistive technology used, breaks in training to enable processing of information.
- Seeking opportunities to improve their effectiveness and increase their skills and knowledge and addressing any gaps therein.
- Attending arranged learning and development opportunities (or catching up with recordings if they are unable to attend).
- Sharing their knowledge and skills with their peers.
- Reviewing their learning and development activities.
- Owning the Member Development Strategy.

Group Leaders

Political Group Leaders should encourage all Members from within their group to participate in the learning and development programme and actively support their Members in doing so.

Governance Committee

The Governance Committee will be responsible for setting the strategic direction for Member Development and overseeing the Member Development Strategy.

The Terms of Reference for the Committee states its role is to oversee the Council's programmes for member development and training.

Democratic Services

The Democratic Services Team will:

- Produce and deliver the elected Member induction programme.
- Produce and support the delivery of the Annual Member Training Programme.
- Arrange and deliver additional training sessions throughout the Council term.
- Record Members' training and development activities during their term of office and regularly report these to the Governance Committee.
- Record feedback of sessions to ensure their impact and benefit is understood.
- Ensure recordings, guides and further information relating to Member Development are stored on the Member's Sharepoint site.
- Assist Members with queries and any basic information on their roles and access to development opportunities.
- Ensuring training events (both internal and external) are advertised to Members.

Senior Leadership Team

All Directors and Heads of Service within the Council are responsible for identifying and delivering service specific training to Elected Members. This can be delivered in many forms and examples of services informing Members include:

- Formal group training for all Members where needs arise.

- Participation in the arrangement and delivery of ad-hoc topic or service specific sessions to Elected Members such as a briefing session.
- Attending Committees to inform Members about specific services/topics.
- Circulating newsletters/factsheets to Members where relevant and contribution to the Members Newsletter on matters of interest.
- Keeping Members informed by providing regular updates to them on services, topics and developments.

Delivery of Member Development

All Elected Members regardless of length of service, party or post within the Council will be given equal access to the training and development opportunities. All Elected Members will be given the support and development needed throughout their term to do their role to the best of their ability.

It is also recognised that Members have different roles and need different skills to those of Officers and as such training should always be tailored, as far as is practicable, to meeting Members' needs.

Member Development activities will be commissioned to meet individual Committee and corporate development priorities and cover:

- Generic skills to enable effective working as a Councillor.
- Service driven activities to support corporate priorities and Committee roles.
- Knowledge to support robust decision making.
- Community leadership to enhance the community role.
- Advanced development activities to enhance leadership skills.
- Skills to meet new ways of working resulting from the changing shape of local government
- In response to any legal requirements, changes to the law or Government policy.

Ongoing Development and Training Sessions

After the Induction Programme and in addition to any mandatory training and Committee development, Elected Members will be invited to a broad range of information and development sessions throughout their term of office. The expectation is that Members continue to develop, not only through on-job activity, but also by attending development sessions.

We will provide learning in a way that meets individual needs through:

- A set Induction Programme after Elections.
- Internal learning events delivered by Officers such as Training Sessions and Briefing Sessions (see Appendix 1 below for the Annual Training Programme).
- Access to nationally recognised learning programmes and conferences, making use of opportunities with national organisations such as the Local Government Association.
- Supporting the work of the Council's Digital Competency Framework by providing access to IT support and training in relation to their role.
- Online resources accessed through the Member's Sharepoint site.
- Access to the Litmos Online Learning platform.

Delivery methods will consider inclusivity, access to learning, subject matter and learning styles offering both face to face, hybrid and online delivery and incorporating a variety of delivery methods.

It is recognised that not all Elected Members may be able to access these training opportunities in the same way due to work, family, personal circumstances. Officers and Members should always

keep in the mind the need to provide training opportunities in different ways, at different times of the day and possibly repeating sessions to allow for the maximum attendance of Elected Members around other commitments.

Many of the training sessions will be recorded to allow Elected Members to access these resources at a time and place that is best for them.

Review and Evaluation

It is expected for the Governance Committee to review the Member Development Programme regularly to identify needs, potential sessions and that the needs of Members are being met. Members on the Committee are expected to regularly seek the feedback of training sessions from other Members, along with feedback recorded at the time of the session, to help evaluate and improve our offer.

Outside Bodies

All Elected Members who are appointed to outside bodies are provided with contact details and information on the organisation where available. It is not possible for the Council to deal with the specific development requirements of Members appointed to represent the Council on every outside body on which it has a nominated representative. The range and diversity of such organisations are extensive, and their operations are out with the locus of the Council. Should training and development be required this should be provided by the outside body.

Records of Training and Development

The Democratic Services Team will record the details of Member training and development opportunities.

The Governance Committee will regularly receive a report on the completed training, learning and development opportunities.

Appendix 1: Annual Planned Member Training Programme

Month	Training Session	Mandatory or Optional	SMT Lead
January			
February			
March			
April			
May	Meeting Procedures	Optional	Head of Legal and Democratic Services
	Executive Member Training	Mandatory for Executive Members	Head of Legal and Democratic Services
June	Planning Committee Training	Mandatory for Committee Members	Head of Development Management
	Overview and Scrutiny Committee Training	Mandatory for Committee Members	Head of Legal and Democratic Services
	Audit Committee Training	Mandatory for Committee Members	Head of Financial Services and Audit
July	Chairing Skills	Mandatory for Chairs and Vice Chairs	Head of Legal and Democratic Services
	Licensing and Regulatory Committee Training	Mandatory for Committee Members	Head of Neighbourhoods
	Standards and Code of Conduct Training	Mandatory for Committee Members	Head of Legal and Democratic Services
August			
September			
October			
November	Overview and Scrutiny Finance and Budget Training	Optional	Head of Financial Services and Audit / Head of Legal and Democratic Services
December	Planning Committee Refresher Training	Mandatory for Committee Members	Head of Development Management

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**Teignbridge District Council
Governance Committee
Tuesday 30th June 2026
Part i**

Member Training and Briefing Log

Purpose of Report

To provide a regular update on Member Development opportunities and briefings for Members from April to June 2026

Recommendation(s)

The Committee RESOLVES to:

- (1) Review the report and consider any further developments to the Member Development Programme.

Financial Implications

No financial implications arise from this report.

Charlie Fisher – Democratic Services Manager & Monitoring Officer

Email: charlie.fisher@teignbridge.gov.uk

Legal Implications

No direct legal implications arise from this report.

Charlie Fisher – Democratic Services Manager & Monitoring Officer

Email: charlie.fisher@teignbridge.gov.uk

Risk Assessment

No direct risk implications arise from this report. The report provides an opportunity to publish the training and briefing events that have taken place to aid transparency of the Council's activities.

Charlie Fisher – Democratic Services Manager & Monitoring Officer

Email: charlie.fisher@teignbridge.gov.uk

Environmental/ Climate Change Implications

No direct environment or climate change implications arise from this report.

Charlie Fisher – Democratic Services Manager & Monitoring Officer

Email: charlie.fisher@teignbridge.gov.uk

Report Author

Charlie Fisher – Democratic Services Manager & Monitoring Officer

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Executive Member

Councillor Richard Keeling – Leader of the Council.

Appendix

1. Member Training and Briefing Log – April – June 2026

1. Introduction/Background

The Governance Committee has an ongoing role to review the Member Development Strategy and the delivery of Member Development.

As part of the agreed Member Development Strategy ([Member Development Strategy 2025.pdf](#)), the Committee are provided with a regular update on the completed training, learning and development opportunities.

In addition to this report, training and development opportunities are listed on Councillor's profile pages on the Council's website under a specific "training" tab.

2. Main Body

The Member Training and Briefing Log is appended to this covering report.

3. Implications, Risk Management and Climate Change Impact

Implications and risks are covered on page 1 of the report.

4. Alternative Options

There is no legal requirement to publish this information, publishing the information provides a transparent overview of the councillor training available.

5. Conclusion

The Committee is asked to review the report and consider any further developments to the Member Development Programme.

Appendix 1: Member Training and Briefing Log

April – June 2026

Date	Training/Briefing Session	Audience	Attendance	Feedback and Evaluation (if collected)
28 th May 2026	Planning Committee Training	Planning Committee Members and Substitutes	14	
2 nd June 2026	Executive Member Training and Budget Briefing	Executive Members	9	
4 th June 2026	Overview and Scrutiny Committee Training	Overview and Scrutiny Committee Members	11	
11 th June and 15 th June 2026	Overview and Scrutiny Committee Training (repeated sessions)	Overview and Scrutiny Committee Members	3	
11 th June 2026	Local Government Reorganisation Structural Changes Order (SCO) Briefing	All Members	12	
19 th June 2026	Housing Delivery Action Plan Briefing	All Members	10	

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**Teignbridge District Council
 Governance Committee
 Tuesday 30th June 2026
 Part i**

Adoption of the Local Government Association's 'Debate not Hate' campaign

Purpose of Report

To review the adoption of the Debate not Hate campaign.

Recommendation(s)

The Governance Committee RECOMMENDS that Full Council:

- (a) Adopt the Local Government Association 'Debate not Hate' campaign and sign up to the 'Debate not Hate' public statement available on the Local Government Association website.
- (b) In doing so, makes a clear public statement that the Council is adopting a zero-tolerance approach to abuse, intimidation, and harassment of Members and Officers.
- (c) Asks for Officers to share the appropriate 'Debate not Hate' resources with all Councillors.
- (d) Agrees for the Chair of the Council, on behalf of the Council, to write to the local Members of Parliament and the Police on the Council's adoption of the campaign.
- (e) Agrees that the Council continues to engage with the Police and Operation Ford, ensuring that Councillors are aware of the reporting mechanisms available to report abuse and intimidation.
- (f) Asks the Governance Committee report annually on the adoption of the campaign and review the safety of Councillors.

Financial Implications

The financial implications are expected to be minimal and can be met from existing budgets. Expected implications would relate to Officer time and capacity.

Charlie Fisher – Democratic Services Manager & Monitoring Officer

Email: charlie.fisher@teignbridge.gov.uk

Legal Implications

No direct legal implications arise from this report, it is a voluntary adoption. Whilst there is no specific statutory requirement to adopt the campaign, the proposal supports the Council's duties under:

- The Local Government Act 1972 (effective discharge of functions);
- The Localism Act 2011 (promotion and maintenance of high standards of conduct); and
- The Council's duty of care to Members and officers.

Charlie Fisher – Democratic Services Manager & Monitoring Officer

Email: charlie.fisher@teignbridge.gov.uk

Risk Assessment

No direct risk implications arise from this report. Breach of the Code of Conduct by

Members is included on the Strategic and Corporate Risk Register, adopting this campaign would be a mitigation against this risk.

Charlie Fisher – Democratic Services Manager & Monitoring Officer

Email: charlie.fisher@teignbridge.gov.uk

Environmental/ Climate Change Implications

No direct environment or climate change implications arise from this report.

Charlie Fisher – Democratic Services Manager & Monitoring Officer

Email: charlie.fisher@teignbridge.gov.uk

Report Author

Charlie Fisher – Democratic Services Manager & Monitoring Officer

charlie.fisher@teignbridge.gov.uk

Executive Member

Councillor Richard Keeling – Leader of the Council.

Appendix

1. Introduction

At its meeting on Tuesday 19th May 2026, Full Council agreed a recommendation that:

“The Monitoring Officer report to the Governance Committee on the adoption by the Council of the Local Government Association (LGA)’s Debate Not Hate campaign and in particular the Ending Abuse in Public Life Council Self-Assessment toolkit as a means of creating a culture of safety and respect for members within and without the Council Chamber”.

This report fulfils that recommendation and provides more information on the Debate Not Hate Campaign.

2. Main Body

The Debate Not Hate campaign aims to raise public awareness of the role of councillors in their communities, encourage healthy debate and improve the responses and support for local politicians facing abuse and intimidation. Serving in public office is both a privilege and a responsibility, yet it comes with its share of challenges which can include abuse and harassment from the public.

Debate Not Hate was launched in 2022 following the Councillor’s Census. This Census [found that seven out of 10 councillors](#) had experienced abuse from the public in the previous year. Further research by the LGA in 2022 and 2025, reinforced concerns that abuse in public life and public discourse is becoming normalised and seriously impacting civic life and local democracy.

As a result, the LGA launched a national campaign highlighting that “debating and disagreeing with one another is a healthy part of democracy, but abuse and intimidation crosses the line into dangerous territory”.

As part of the campaign, Councils are able to undertake a self-assessment of their Councillors and the LGA provide a range of resources and guidance on promoting the campaign.

Councillors and Councils can sign up to a public statement aimed at lobbying the Government, Police, Political Parties and Social Media companies:

“We are calling on local government leaders, the Government and relevant partners, like the police, political parties and social media companies to come together through a government convened working group to produce and implement an action plan that addresses the abuse and intimidation of elected members and candidates and ensures their safety while they fulfil their democratic roles”

Over 800 Councillors have signed up the public statement. Locally, Cornwall Council, Devon County Council, Torbay Council have signed up as a Council to the campaign by passing resolutions by Full Council.

For further information on the LGA Debate Not Hate Campaign: [Debate Not Hate | Local Government Association](#)

Commitments under the campaign

If approved, the Council will commit to:

2.1 Zero-tolerance approach

- Publicly affirm that abuse and intimidation toward Members and officers will not be tolerated in any form (including online).

2.2 Reporting and monitoring

- Establish or strengthen a formal system for Members to report incidents of abuse or harassment.
- Maintain oversight through the Monitoring Officer and the Governance Committee.

2.3 Support for Members

- Provide guidance, training, and access to support (including wellbeing support where required).
- Ensure Members are aware of available protections and reporting routes.

2.4 Partnership working

- Work with local police and relevant agencies to ensure clear escalation

pathways for threats or criminal behaviour.

2.5 Leadership and culture

- Promote respectful debate in all Council meetings and communications.
- Encourage Group Leaders to reinforce expected standards of behaviour.

2.6 Advocacy

- Write to local Members of Parliament to support national action on abuse of elected representatives.

3. Implications, Risk Management and Climate Change Impact

Implications and risks are covered on page 1 of the report.

4. Alternative Options

This is a voluntary campaign to sign up to; the Council does not have to sign up to this campaign.

5. Conclusion

The Committee is asked to review the report and recommendations regarding the adoption of the Local Government Association's Debate Not Hate Campaign.

10B – PROTOCOL FOR MEMBER / OFFICER RELATIONS

1. Purpose

- 1.1 The purpose of this Protocol is to guide Members and Officers of the Council in their relations with one another. The Protocol’s intention is to promote build and maintain good working relationships between Members and Officers as they work together.
- 1.2 A strong, constructive, and trusting relationship between Members and Officers is essential to the effective and efficient working of the Council.
- 1.3 The provisions of this Protocol are designed to complement and have regard to the requirements of the Councillor’s Role Profiles, Members’ Code of Conduct, the Officers’ Code of Conduct, the Council’s Whistleblowing Policy and the Council’s policies, procedures and processes. This Protocol sets out how the relationship works and what both Members and Officers can expect in terms of mutual respect and good working relationships.
- 1.4 The Managing Director (Head of Paid Service), the Monitoring Officer and the Director of Corporate Services (Section 151 Officer) have specific responsibilities placed on them by law. These responsibilities go beyond their obligations as employees of the Council. Where an Officer is discharging their responsibilities under any statutory office Members shall not compromise or attempt to compromise their impartiality and must allow them to carry out their duties in a neutral, non-biased and non-partisan way.

2. Roles of Members and Officers

2.1 Members and Officers are indispensable to one another. However, their responsibilities are distinct. Members are accountable to the public, whereas Officers are accountable to the Council as a whole.

2.2 Definitions in this document:

- Members: refers to elected or co-opted Members (Councillors).
- Officers: refers to staff employed by the Council.
- Senior Officers: refers to the Senior Leadership Team and/or Statutory Officers.

2.3 Comparison of Member and Officer Roles:

	Members or Councillors	Officers
How do they get their role?	Elected Office	Recruited on merit
Who are they accountable to?	The public	To the Council as a whole
Political mandate?	Yes	No – strictly impartial and neutral
Role	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strategic direction • Decision Makers • Represent constituents 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Operational delivery • Implementation of decisions • Professional advice

2.4 The full role profile of Members and different roles can be found under Section 8a of the Constitution. The general “All Member” definition also includes rights and expectations

from the Council to its Councillors including to develop good working relationships with Officers.

3. Shared Values and underlying principles

- Mutual trust, respect and courtesy at all times.
- Recognising and respecting the different roles that Members and Officers have.
- Working constructively for the good of the Council and the residents of Teignbridge.
- All of those in public life must adhere to the Nolan Principles.

4. Expectations

4.1 Officers can expect Members:

- To give political leadership and direction and to seek to further their policies and objectives.
- To take final decisions after considering Officer advice.
- To work constructively in partnership with Officers acknowledging their separate and distinct roles and responsibilities and the Council's policies, procedures etc.
- To treat them fairly and with respect, dignity and courtesy, to give support and to respect appropriate confidentiality.
- To appreciate that Officers work to the instructions of their managers who ultimately deliver the decisions of the Council itself rather than individual members.
- To respect the impartiality of Officers and their role in carrying out their duties.
- Make them aware of urgent or emerging issues in their Ward.

4.2 Members can expect Officers to:

- Implement decisions of the Council and its Committees which are lawful, which have been properly approved in accordance with the requirements of the law and the Council's Constitution and are duly recorded.
- Work in partnership with Members in an impartial and professional manner.
- Treat Members fairly and with respect, dignity and courtesy.
- Assist and advise all parts of the Council. Officers must always act to the best of their abilities in the best interests of the authority as expressed in the Council's formal decisions.
- Respond to enquiries and complaints in accordance with the Council's procedures.
- Be alert to issues which are, or are likely to be, contentious or politically sensitive, and be aware of the implications for Members, the media or other sections of the public.
- Make them aware of key issues in their Ward.
- Act with honesty, respect, dignity and courtesy.
- Not seek to use their relationship with Members to advance their personal interests or to influence decisions improperly.

5. Conduct at meetings of the Council

5.1 Members should question Officers with respect and courtesy. Officers should respect Members in the way they respond to Members' questions. There should be a formal element to Council meetings, addressing Councillors by the correct terminology e.g. Councillor [Surname], The Leader, Chair, Etc.

- 5.2 Questions and criticisms in meetings are for the topic under debate and the content of papers presented. Members are expected to question and challenge any reports or decisions but ensure these are constructive and not personal attacks on Officers as Officers have no automatic right to reply.
- 5.3 Officers provide technical knowledge regarding reports and give advice to Committees and sub-committees of the Council. All reports to Council meetings include the name of a contact officer, and Members are encouraged to approach that Officer for any query or issue they wish to raise prior to the meeting.
- 5.4 Officers do not have the right per se to take part in debates in meetings, however they may be asked to respond to questions. To fulfil their duties, Statutory Officers and Senior Officer may need to offer advice to the Chair, the Council or Committees if required and as necessary.

6. Meetings with Officers

- 6.1 Since the introduction of flexible/hybrid working practices, Officers do not always occupy the same desk. To ensure that an Officer is available, Members are advised to arrange a meeting to ensure that the Officer is available.
- 6.2 Members are usually not desk based, and work in a different way to Officers. Sending an email or diary invite to a Member is not a guarantee that a Member is aware. In respect of important or urgent issues, Officers should ensure that Members have received, acknowledged or responded an invite or message, and if not contact the Member in person or by phone or email.

7. Member enquiries and officer responses

- 7.1 Members should communicate with officers in the manner and at the level appropriate to the issue. Routine service-related enquiries should be initiated through the Council's Member Contact Form or where this is not possible, through email, telephone or in person inquiries. However, it will usually be appropriate to raise significant issues with the relevant Director or Head of Service for that area.
- 7.2 In normal circumstances, a full response should be given to all enquiries or requests for information from a member within a reasonable time frame. Where it is not possible to provide a response within that period an acknowledgment and a brief explanation for the delay and timescale for response should be provided to the Member.
- 7.3 Correspondence between Members and Officers may not always be shareable with the public. Members should consult the Officer responding if they plan to share their response more widely.

8. Access to Information

- 8.1 Access to Information procedural rules are included within Section 4 of the Constitution.

9. Support Services to Members

- 9.1 The Council's Democratic Services Team provide basic support to Members to help them fulfill their role and are usually a Member's first port of call if they are unsure whom to contact.
- 9.2 The Council via STRATA provide IT equipment, training and resources to all Members.
- 9.3 The Council provide office space and meeting rooms for Members to use whilst in Forde House.

10. Relationship with the Press and Media

- 10.1 Official contact with the media on Council business will normally be handled through the Communications Team. Members and Officers will work co-operatively together in dealing with any publicity or media issue arising.
- 10.2 All such contact should be in accordance with the Code of Recommended Practice on Local Authority Publicity issued by the Department of Communities and Local Government.
- 10.3 Quotes on behalf of the Council for media purposes would normally come from members - normally leading members of the administration appointed by the Council to exercise delegated powers in the relevant area or group leaders - but not so as to appear to effect support for any political party. The content of such quotes for press releases will be cleared in advance with the members concerned. The Leader and Executive Members will normally speak on behalf of the Council for their area of responsibility.
- 10.4 Members should not raise matters relating to the conduct or capability of an Officer, or Officers collectively on social media or in the press. Officers do not necessarily have a right of reply to such comments and Members should take care not to abuse or exploit this imbalance.

11. Breaches of the Protocol

- 11.1 Where the relationship between Members and Officers breaks down or becomes strained, every effort will be made to reconcile or resolve matters informally.
- 11.2 A Member who is unhappy about the actions taken by, or conduct of, an Officer should first take up the concern with the appropriate Head of Service or if the matter is of a particularly serious nature inform the Managing Director.
- 11.3 Where a Member is continued to be dissatisfied with the conduct, behaviour or performance of an Officer, the matter should be raised in line with the Officer conduct complaints procedure.
- 11.4 Where an Officer is unhappy about the actions taken by, or conduct of, a Member, they should first take up the concern with the Managing Director and/or Monitoring Officer who may be able to raise the concern with the Member's Group Leader.

11.5 Where an Officer is dissatisfied with the conduct or behaviour of a Member, they may make a complaint in line with the Members' Code of Conduct procedure. Breaches of this Protocol by a Member may constitute a breach of the Members' Code of Conduct.

12. Monitoring, Review and further advice

- 12.1 The application and implementation of this Protocol will be monitored and reviewed by the Council's Governance Committee.
- 12.2 Further advice on the interpretation of this Protocol is available from the Managing Director or Monitoring Officer.

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CONSTITUTION REVIEW WORKING GROUP

THURSDAY, 16 APRIL 2026

Present:

Camilla de Bernhardt Lane (CfGS) (Chair)
Councillors Bullivant, Sanders, Steemson and J Taylor

Apologies:

Councillors Clarence, Dawson, Hall and Palethorpe

Officers in Attendance:

Trish Corns, Principal Democratic Services Officer
Charlie Fisher, Democratic Services Manager and Monitoring Officer

1. NOTES

The notes of the meeting held on 26 March 2026 were received and approved

2. ACTIONS ARISING FROM THE PREVIOUS MEETING

It was noted that the Group's considerations at the last meeting relating to the public speaking process for Overview and Scrutiny Committee would be referred to the Governance Committee.

3. OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY CALL IN PROCEDURE

Consideration was given to the draft OS call in procedure circulated with the agenda compiled taking into account issues the group had asked to be included at the last meeting.

This was agreed subject to the following:

- Agenda page 12, paragraph 2 – to include 7 days in total.
- Agenda page 13, paragraph 6 – 3 *working days* to be added on the 3rd line following *A reasonable period of Notice*.

The Councillors Call In Request Form was agreed subject to:

- Delete the words *without* and *of* from the 1st line of 2. Reason for the call in.
- Add 4. *Exceptional circumstances with agreement of the monitoring officer* to Reason for the call in.
- Add the following at the foot of the form:
 - Date - for Cllr to sign
 - Date of Committee meeting to which the call in was considered.
 - Decision of the call in – refused/approved/etc and decision.

- Any other information prompt for additional history of the call in i.e. date reconsidered by Executive and decision if applicable.

4. MEMBER-OFFICER PROTOCOL

Consideration was given to the current Teignbridge Member/Officer relations as circulated with the agenda. Consideration was also given to a tick sheet of other authorities' protocols advising what feature and component were included in each for comparison purposes.

It was considered that some components of the Teignbridge protocol were duplicated in the separate protocols of Member and Officer roles.

It was agreed that:

- A further bullet point relating to confidentiality be included in paragraph 2.2.
- Teignbridge's protocols for Member roles, Officer roles and Member/Officer protocol be put through co-pilot for rewriting.
- Any other relevant features from the Blackpool and LGA guidance not included be considered for inclusion.

5. ACCESS TO INFORMATION RIGHTS

Consideration was given to the Council's current Access to Information Rights which was currently part of Section 4 Procedure Rules of the Constitution.

It was agreed that consideration could be given to the merits of making this a separate document.

6. REVIEW OF THE CONSTITUTION REVIEW WORKING GROUP

This was the penultimate meeting of the Group and the final meeting with Camilla, and members reviewed its work over the past 18 months to 2 years when it was formed and tasked with reviewing the Constitution. Successes and decisions approved by Council were recalled. It was agreed that the cross political membership had worked well and had a significant impact on improvements to the Constitution.

The Group thanked Camilla for her input, advise and support as Director with the CfGS and for chairing the Group, and wished her well in her new position with Grant Thornton.

The Group's final meeting would be 10am, 30 April 2026.

CONSTITUTION REVIEW WORKING GROUP

THURSDAY, 30 APRIL 2026

Present:

Councillors Bullivant, Clarence, MacGregor, Sanders and Steemson

Apologies:

Councillors Dawson, Hall, Palethorpe and J Taylor

Officers in Attendance:

Trish Corns, Principal Democratic Services Officer

Charlie Fisher, Democratic Services Manager and Monitoring Officer

It was noted that Councillor MacGregor had been appointed to the Group by his Group Leader to fill the Independent Group's vacant seat.

1. NOTES

The notes of the meeting held on 16 April 2026 were received and approved.

2. ACTIONS ARISING FROM THE PREVIOUS MEETING

All actions from the previous meeting had been processed and amendments to documents were the subject of notes below for approval.

3. SECTION 3 - DECISION MAKING STRUCTURE

Consideration was given to a revised Section 3 Decision Making Structure.

It was noted that:

- There would need to be an additional arrangement once a shadow authority for LGR was in place.
- Sections 3.4.7, 3.4.8, and 3.11(Substitute Members) were procedural and therefore had been moved from Section 3 to Section 4.
- Section 3 did not need to be referred to Council for approval as no additional text had been added.

It was agreed that Section 3 as amended and circulated with the agenda be approved and it was noted that it was not necessary to be referred to Council for approval.

4. SECTION 4 - PROCEDURAL RULES

Consideration was given to amended Section 4 Procedural Rules. The group's views were sought on text deleted, highlighted text that had been added and other

highlighted updated text which had been amended from the current procedural rules.

It was noted that Sections 3.4.7, 3.4.8, and 3.11(Substitute Members) from Section 3 (see note above) had been moved to Section 4.

It was agreed that the amended version be referred to Council for approval subject to the following paragraphs:

- 4.2.4 - “or relocated” be added.
- 4.11.1 – delete “call” from penultimate line.
- 4.12.2 (j) – add “where applicable.”
- 4.12.4.4 – change “if” to “is” 2nd line, 2nd paragraph.
- 4.13.1 – change “three” to “five” clear working days.
 - Change the maximum period of time allowed from 15 to 30 minutes.

- 4.13.3 – 1st paragraph – delete and replace with “At Overview and Scrutiny Committee meetings, a member of the public who is resident in the District may make an oral representation.”
 - 2nd paragraph – add “or to bring items to the attention of the Committee.”
 - 3rd paragraph -change 15 minutes to 30 minutes.
 - 4th paragraph – change 3 clear working days to 5.
 - Add new paragraph:

Representations should relate to one of the following:

 - a. A substantive matter on the agenda for that meeting (not including minutes or work programmes);
 - b. A service area of activity which would be timely for review;
 - c. It is a policy which has been recently introduced or has running for some time and is due for review;
 - d. Major proposals for change;
 - e. Areas of public concern; or
 - f. Areas of poor performance.
 - Add “relates to something that is or should be the subject of alternative recognised procedures (e.g. staffing issues, complaints, licensing or planning matters)” and “is not a matter for which the local authority has a responsibility or does not affect the District” to the reasons the MO can decline a representation paragraph

- 4.14 – 2nd paragraph – confirm 5 clear working days.
- 4.14 - last paragraph – delete “is to be asked if they agree to the question being” and add “will be referred.”
- 4.17.1115 - **Non-Committee Members attending Committees** – add the following to the penultimate sentence “who in certain circumstances may limit the attendance of those in the room (E.g. confidential or staffing matters).”
 - Delete the last sentence.

5. SECTION 10B - MEMBER OFFICER PROTOCOL

Consideration was given to the revised Member Officer protocol which was a mixture of the Blackpool example previously discussed and Teignbridge's revised role profiles and current Member Officer protocol. AI had been used to help find similar areas and missing sections in the Council's current documents.

It was agreed that the protocol be referred to Council for approval with the following amendments:

- Add additional bullet point to paragraph 4.1 - *Make them aware of urgent or emerging issues in their Ward*
- Paragraph 5.2 to be reworded as - *Questions and criticisms in meetings are for the topic under debate and the content of papers presented. Members are expected to question and challenge any reports or decisions but ensure these are constructive and not personal attacks on Officers as Officers have no automatic right to reply.*
- Paragraph 6.1 – delete *officers may work from home for up to 50% of the time. In light of this...*
- Paragraph 6.2 - replace text after *responded* 4th line with *an invite or message, and if not contact the Member in person or by phone or email.*
- Paragraph 7.3 – replace first sentence with *Correspondence between Members and Officers may not always be shareable with the public.*
- Paragraph 10.4 – delete the words at 2nd line *in a manner that is incompatible with this protocol at* and as *Members do* at 4th line.

Chairman

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