

**Teignbridge District Council**  
**Audit Scrutiny**  
**18 December 2024**  
**Part 1**

**GOVERNANCE – IMPROVEMENT PLAN MONITORING**

**Purpose of Report**

- To give members of the Audit Scrutiny Committee an overview of progress against the Governance Improvement Plan which was agreed at full Council on 29 October 2024.

**Recommendation(s)**

**The Audit Scrutiny Committee is recommended to note the report.**

**Financial Implications**

As set out in the [report to full Council 29 October 2024 para. 3.1.1 and 3.1.2.](#)

**Legal Implications**

As set out in the [report to full Council 29 October 2024 para. 3.1.2.](#)

**Risk Assessment**

As set out in the [report to full Council 29 October 2024 paras 3.3.1 and 3.3.2.](#)

**Environmental / Climate Change Implications**

No direct implications.

**Report Author**

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**Executive Member**

Cllr Richard Keeling – Leader of the Council

## 1. INTRODUCTION / BACKGROUND

- 1.1 A [Corporate Peer Review](#) was undertaken by the Local Government Association in January 2024. Recommendations made by the Peers have been set out in an Action Plan which was [approved by Council](#) on 29 October 2024.
- 1.2 In addition to the Peer Review, the Council's governance has also been scrutinised externally by the Centre for Governance and Scrutiny (CfGS) and the Council's external auditor, Grant Thornton. Improvement actions relating to member and officer roles and relations were also recorded in the Council's Annual Governance Statement as follows:

Issue	Planned Action
<p><u>Member and Officer roles and relationships</u></p> <p>Good working relationships are crucial to good governance. The Centre for Governance and Scrutiny (CfGS) were commissioned to review officer/member roles and responsibilities, including consideration of values, behaviours, and ethical issues, and the constitutional provisions supporting these.</p> <p>The Peer Review completed in January 2024 has also made recommendations around enhancing communication and collaboration, strengthening trust and moral, and implementing methods for effective decision making.</p> <p>Planned development of the new Member and Officer protocol , and the Constitution review, which are essential components of the governance framework have been delayed.</p>	<p>Work is ongoing to implement the recommendations from both reviews. Specific actions relevant to this issue, remaining to be addressed in 2024-25 include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Completing the Constitution Review. Workshops have been held on various topics and feedback from these will be used to inform a revised Constitution.</li> <li>- Finalising the Member and Officer protocol. This will give clarity of roles and aid decision making. A draft protocol will be reviewed by the Procedures Committee in July 2024 before presenting full Council for approval.</li> <li>- Continuing the enhanced member training programme.</li> <li>- Delivering the new Council Strategy which is currently in progress. Member and other stakeholder working groups are being held, to ensure they are full engaged with this . The Strategy will help give clarity and direct the work of the Council when it is completed.</li> </ul>

1.3 It is noted that the Governance Improvement Plan is targeted and focused on specific actions to address the Peers' observations, and that these generally mirror the governance themes within the AGS and other reviews. The LGA are re-visiting the Council in February 2025 to review progress.

1.4 The Governance Improvement Plan is appended below with notes in **red text** and *italic* where actions are due.

## **2. CONCLUSION & RECOMMENDATION**

Members are asked to note the report.

## **3. GROUPS CONSULTED**

Not applicable.

## **4. DATE OF IMPLEMENTATION (CONFIRMATION OF DECISION SUBJECT TO CALL-IN)**

Not applicable.

## Governance Improvement Plan – Audit Scrutiny update – 18<sup>th</sup> December 2024

Theme: Relationships			
Action	Measure	Lead officer / member	Timescale
Senior Officer Availability for Group Meetings	Senior Leadership and Senior Management Team officers will be available to attend meetings with the Council's various political groups to discuss and advise on relevant topics on council agendas, questions and topic areas identified in advance.	Senior Leadership Team, Group Leaders	On request

Theme: Constitution			
Action	Measure	Lead officer / member	Timescale
Defining strategic roles and responsibilities	Develop an Executive Members / Strategic Leadership Team charter that clarifies respective roles, responsibilities and commitments and embeds this into the Council's constitution. Establish role profiles for Executive Members, clarifying their duties and accountability, including communicating relevant information throughout the Council.  <i>Update Dec 2024: The agenda for full Council 14<sup>th</sup> January 2025 includes a report on the Constitution.</i>	Managing Director / Leader	December 2024
Governance and Constitution Review	Having completed the first stage review with the Centre for Governance and Scrutiny, a task and finish group has been created to review and recommend to Full Council, amendments and changes to the constitution.	Monitoring Officer / Leader	July 2025
Decision making flow-chart	Linked to the constitution review, update website with a simple explanation on how council decisions are made. This information should be accessible to councillors, officers, stakeholders, businesses and residents and act as an index that also leads to more detailed information (e.g. links to constitution sections).	Democratic Service Team Leader	March 2025

Theme: Council Strategy and Partnerships
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Action	Measure	Lead officer / member	Timescale
Adopt and implement a new 'One Teignbridge' Council Strategy	<p>Following engagement with the community and partners in shaping the Council Strategy, the Council will adopt the strategy and accompanying action plan that sets out priorities and key actions over the life of the Strategy.</p> <p><b>Update Dec 2024: Following public consultation, a final version of the Strategy is being taken to full Council 14<sup>th</sup> January 2025.</b></p>	Director of Place / Head of Partnerships and Strategy	January 2025
Refresh Council Strategy Performance and Risk Monitoring Framework	Overhaul existing Council Strategy monitoring processes and systems to streamline reporting of key progress indicators and ensure that budget considerations are at the forefront of planning and implementation. Our monitoring framework will also monitor ongoing customer needs and community feedback, so that it can be used to help inform Partnership Board recommendations and Council Strategy Action Plan decisions.	Director of Place / Head of Partnerships and Strategy	July 2025
Ongoing engagement with Town and Parish Councils	An ongoing programme of communication involving detailed workshops on key issues like town planning to build trust, cooperation, and community involvement. This work will involve understanding one another's priorities and potentially co-creating a charter for mutually beneficial working relationships.	Director of Place / Head of Partnerships and Strategy	On-going

Theme: Functioning authority			
Action	Measure	Lead officer / member	Timescale
Appoint Opposition Overview and Scrutiny Chairs	Appoint a chair and vice-chair from opposition political parties to Overview and Scrutiny Committee to foster greater transparency and fairness.	Leader	May 2025

Routine briefings ahead of complex decisions	Continue specialist officer briefings for councillors ahead of all complex (determined by the relevant Executive Member/s) committee decisions and provide updates and (ordinarily) annual refresher sessions throughout long-term project implementation (like Modern 25) or decision-making phases, including reminders about previous council decisions.	Lead officers will vary per theme	Ad hoc
Centralised Record of Council Decisions	Enhance or replace existing systems into a centralised and searchable repository of all council decisions and subsequent progress with projects. This will ensure transparency, accountability and easy access to up to date information for councillors, officers and members of the public.	Democratic Service Team Leader	April 2025
Essential Officer Training	Implement and maintain an ongoing programme of officer training centred on the council constitution; officer/member protocol; and ensuring timely and effective communication with councillors, town and parish councillors and other key partners.	Head of Human Resources and Organisational Development	April 2025
Establish an Invest to Save Budget	Bring forward a medium-term financial plan and annual budget with an 'Invest to Save' provision that grows to at least £500,000, enabling us to allocate resources to delivering long-term efficiencies.	Director of Corporate	February 2025
Introduce a new modern finance system	Retain sufficient staff resources to ensure delivery of the project, with dedicated project managers at both Teignbridge District Council and Strata.	Director of Corporate	May 2026