

Teignbridge District Council
Audit Scrutiny
16 April 2025
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.

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

Sue Heath – Audit & Information Governance Manager

Tel: 01626 215258

Email: sue.heath@teignbridge.gov.uk

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 and reviewed by the Peers during a follow up visit to the Council in February 2025.
- 1.2 In addition to the Peer Review, the Council's governance has been further scrutinised externally by the Centre for Governance and Scrutiny (CfGS) and the Council's external auditor, Grant Thornton. The external audit resulted in 6 statutory recommendations as [approved by the Audit Scrutiny Committee](#) on 13 February 2025 and full Council 25 February 2025.
- 1.3 Improvement actions relating to member and officer roles and relations were also recorded in the Council's [Annual Governance Statement 2023-2024](#)
- 1.4 The Governance Improvement Plan is appended below with notes in **red text** and *italic* where actions are due.
- 1.5 The Governance Improvement Plan is targeted and focused on actions to address the Peers' observations, however these governance themes are common within the other reviews noted above. A mapping exercise has therefore been undertaken to group all recommendations under the common themes which will be presented at the meeting.

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 – 15th April 2025

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	<p>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.</p> <p><i>Update April 2025: This is being addressed through the Centre for Governance and Scrutiny Working Group. Amendments to the constitution were postponed from the February 2025 Full Council to be added to the agenda for the Annual Council meeting in May 2025.</i></p>	Managing Director / Leader	December 2024
Governance and Constitution Review	<p>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.</p> <p><i>Update April 2025: Amendments to the constitution were postponed from the February 2025 Full Council to be added to the agenda for the Annual Council meeting in May 2025.</i></p>	Monitoring Officer / Leader	July 2025
Decision making flow-chart	<p>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).</p> <p><i>Update April 2025: This task will be allocated to the recently appointed Democratic Services Team Leader and Monitoring Officer.</i></p>	Democratic Service Team Leader	March 2025

Theme: Council Strategy and Partnerships			
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>Update April 2025: The One Teignbridge Council Strategy was formally adopted on the 14th Jan 2025. Working groups are now meeting based around the five themes to develop the Action Plan.</p>	Director of Place / Head of Partnerships and Strategy	January 2025
Refresh Council Strategy Performance and Risk Monitoring Framework	<p>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.</p> <p>Update April 2025: The One Teignbridge Council Strategy Action Plan will define new performance indicators and involve the creation of an easily accessible monitoring system through PowerBI.</p>	Director of Place / Head of Partnerships and Strategy	July 2025
Ongoing engagement with Town and Parish Councils	<p>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.</p> <p>Update April 2025: Development of this charter has been delayed by staff absence within DALC, but work is ongoing to develop this charter by bringing together a working group of representative Town and Parish councils. Representative Town and Parish Councils have been invited to join the One Teignbridge Council Strategy Action Group, and the Head of Development Management has organized a series of Planning Workshops for Town and Parish Councils.</p>	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. <i>Update April 2025: This task will be allocated to the recently appointed Democratic Services Team Leader and Monitoring Officer.</i>	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. <i>Update April 2025: A training session run by DALC on working with Town and Parish Councils has been arranged for officers in April 2025.</i>	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. <i>Update April 2025: This was agreed at the 2025 budget meeting: £400,000 was already identified at 31 March 2024, planned to increase again to £500,000 at 31 March 2025.</i>	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. <i>Update April 2025: Additional Project Management resource has been approved and hiring processes are being completed with expected start dates in May 2025.</i>	Director of Corporate	May 2026