

Teignbridge District Council
Audit Committee
17 December 2025
Part 1

GOVERNANCE IMPROVEMENT PLANS

Purpose of Report

- To give members of the Audit Committee an overview of progress against recommendations to improve governance.

Recommendation(s)

The Audit Committee is recommended to note the report.

Financial Implications

There have been a number of minor financial implications e.g. an extension to the Member and Officer training programme, bringing in the Centre for Governance and Scrutiny to review the Constitution, and appointment of an independent member for the audit committee. All are considered relatively low value and necessary to achieve intended improvement.

Legal Implications

There are no Legal implications related to approving the Action Plan. However, it should be noted that the actions within the plan contain several activities relating to changes to the Council's Constitution.

Risk Assessment

Failure to improve governance could increase the likelihood of ineffective decision making, and ability to deliver quality services. It could also have reputational impacts and may lead to future scrutiny of the effectiveness of governance and performance at the Council.

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 Implementation of recommendations aimed at improving governance have been ongoing since an initial Corporate Peer Review was undertaken by the Local Government Association in January 2024. The action plan arising from this 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 The Council's governance has also been monitored by the Centre for Governance and Scrutiny (CfGS) and the Council's external auditor, Grant Thornton. The external audit resulted in 6 statutory recommendations [approved by the Audit Committee](#) on 13 February 2025 and full Council 25 February 2025.
- 1.3 The Council's [Annual Governance Statement 2023-2024](#) also includes a number of governance improvements.
- 1.4 Consolidated improvement actions from all of the above reviews and their current status is shown in the table below.

2. CONCLUSION & RECOMMENDATION

Good progress is being made. Members are recommended to note the report.

3. GROUPS CONSULTED

Not applicable.

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

Not applicable.

Peer Review Action Plan

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 (SLT meet with Group Leaders monthly)

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><u>Update April 2025:</u> 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.</p> <p><u>Update Sept 2025:</u> Ongoing - the Role Profiles element was started and discussed in the working group, but due to go back to the working group on 25th September for further discussion.</p> <p><u>Update Oct 2025:</u> Ongoing - the Role Profiles element was started and discussed in the working group, but due to go back to the working group on 6th November for further discussion.</p> <p><u>Update December 2025:</u> Draft Role Profiles have been created for a range of Member Roles (Councillor, Leader, Deputy Leader, Executive Member, Chair of the Council, Vice Chair of the Council, Committee Chairs, Group Leaders, Shadow Executive Members) and due to return to the working group on 18th December. The draft role profiles have been shared with the respective Members for comment.</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><u>Update April 2025:</u> 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> <p><i><u>Update Sept 2025:</u> The first stage of work has been completed and a number of changes to the Constitution were agreed by Full Council in May 2025. SLT agreed another stage of work with CFGS which is due to begin in September 2025 with the working group for this meeting every 3 weeks. The Democratic Services Team Leader / Deputy Monitoring Officer, is working through the Constitution and making minor amendments which in accordance with the scheme of delegation.</i></p> <p><i><u>Update Oct 2025:</u> The Constitution Review Working Group has begun its second commission and will continue to meet every 3 weeks. Minor amendments have been made to the Constitution and are awaiting publication, which should be imminent._</i></p> <p><i><u>Update December 2025:</u> The working group continues to meet every 3 weeks, with expected changes to the Constitution to be agreed at the Full Council meeting in January 2026 based on their work and agreed proposals. An updated Constitution has been published (October 2025) to cover minor amendments and previous changes ratified by Full Council in May 2025 and July 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><u>Update April 2025:</u> This task will be allocated to the recently appointed Democratic Services Team Leader and Monitoring Officer.</i></p> <p><i><u>Update Sept 2025:</u> Completed 22.8.25</i> <i><u>How we make decisions - Teignbridge District Council</u></i></p> <p><i><u>Update December 2025:</u> An updated internal guidance document on the Decision-Making Process and an updated guide to writing Committee reports have been created and shared with Staff in November 2025 via the Staff Newsletter.</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><u>Update April 2025:</u> 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> <p><u>Update Sept 2025:</u> We have met with various partners, elected Councillors, staff members and community groups to agree priority actions for our Action Plan. The final Action Plan will be taken to Full Council in October 2025 to ask approval for adoption.</p> <p><u>Update Oct 2025:</u> One Teignbridge Strategy Action Plan due for approval at Full Council on 23rd October 2025.</p> <p><u>Update December 2025:</u> One Teignbridge Action Plan adopted at Full Council on 23.10.25. The Action Plan is now being rolled out with performance monitoring to be linked to the new KPIs from Q3 2025/26.</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><u>Update April 2025:</u> 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> <p><u>Update Sept 2025:</u> Performance indicators have been proposed which align with the new Local Government Outcomes Framework and other national reporting, to allow comparison between TDC and partner authorities. These will be reported through interactive PowerBI dashboards, presented to the Council Strategy Working Group for review, and brought before Full Council in October 2025.</p>	Director of Place / Head of Partnerships and Strategy	July 2025

	<i><u>Update December 2025:</u> Updated performance indicators have been included within the Action Plan, aligned to the identified projects. Reporting on this new performance monitoring framework will take place from Q3 2025/26.</i>		
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><i><u>Update April 2025:</u> 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 organised a series of Planning Workshops for Town and Parish Councils.</i></p> <p><i><u>Update Sept 2025:</u> A Town and Parish Council Working Agreement is due to come to the Executive on 7th October for approval.</i></p> <p><i><u>Update December 2025:</u> A Town and Parish Council Charter was approved by Executive on 02.12.25. For rollout, Devon Association of Local Councils will share this with the Town and Parish Councils, while officers in the Strategy and Partnerships service will arrange communications to officers and wider members on the charter, process, and implications.</i></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	<p>Appoint a chair and vice-chair from opposition political parties to Overview and Scrutiny Committee to foster greater transparency and fairness.</p> <p><i><u>Update Sept 2025:</u> Completed May 2025.</i></p>	Leader	May 2025

Routine briefings ahead of complex decisions	<p>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.</p> <p><i><u>Update Sept 2025: A number of these have taken place or are scheduled e.g. Public Conveniences, Local Govt Review, Planning, Migration and Refugees.</u></i></p> <p><i><u>Update December 2025:</u></i> <i>Continued as part of business as usual for updates on upcoming decisions, project implementation or to update Members on urgent issues.</i></p>	Lead officers will vary per theme	Ad hoc
Centralised Record of Council Decisions	<p>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.</p> <p><i><u>Update April 2025: This task will be allocated to the recently appointed Democratic Services Team Leader and Monitoring Officer.</u></i></p> <p><i><u>Update Sept 2025: This has now been implemented.</u></i></p> <p><i><u>Update December 2025: This has now been implemented and Democratic Services have embedded recording decisions in Modern.Gov to keep the centralised record updated. Further work to embed the recording of Officer decisions with SMT is ongoing.</u></i></p>	Democratic Service Team Leader	April 2025
Essential Officer Training	<p>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.</p> <p><i><u>Update April 2025: A training session run by DALC on working with Town and Parish Councils has been arranged for officers in April 2025.</u></i></p> <p><i><u>Update Sept 2025: The Democratic Services Team Leader / Deputy Monitoring Officer is available for support as and when required.</u></i></p> <p><i><u>Update December 2025: As above</u></i></p>	Head of Human Resources and Organisational Development	April 2025

Establish an Invest to Save Budget	<p>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.</p> <p><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></p> <p><i>Update Sept 2025: The closing of the accounts 24-25 incorporated an increase in reserves to £500k.</i></p>	Director of Corporate	February 2025
Introduce a new modern finance system	<p>Retain sufficient staff resources to ensure delivery of the project, with dedicated project managers at both Teignbridge District Council and Strata.</p> <p><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></p> <p><i>Update Sept 2025: Due to difficulties in implementation experienced by all three councils, a decision has been made to cease further work on the project and realign resources to improving the existing FMS system until May 2026 when we will have better information around who our LGR partners will be.</i></p>	Director of Corporate	May 2026

Grant Thornton – Auditor’s Annual Report for the year ended 31 March 2024

Statutory Recommendations:

Recommendation Feb 2025	Council Response Feb 2025	Update Sept 2025	Update December 2025
SR1. Appoint a suitably qualified expert to investigate the underlying causes of member behaviours which contravene standards and develop an action plan to enable members and officers to address these issues.	The Council has commissioned the CfGS to conduct reviews and are working with them to review the constitution. Members of the administration have had workshops with officers to improve the working relationship and clarify roles.	Hoey Ainscough Associates have been appointed. Arranging an officer / member survey and in-person meetings scheduled for mid October.	Hoey Ainscough and Associates ran a survey and completed 2.5 days of interviews over 14-16 th October. Hoey Ainscough and Associates met with Statutory Officers on 2 nd December to present the findings and recommendations, before an All Member session on 15 th January 2025 before Full Council.
SR2. Adopt a zero-tolerance approach to any swearing, lack of respect for others, or other abusive behaviour using full procedural rules.	Agreed. Support and training is given to chairs and members but there is a lack of support from councillors across the chamber to address this behaviour in meetings.	Ongoing - the Monitoring Officer is supporting chairs of meetings. New member strategy has been approved by SLT which includes mandatory chair training.	Code of Conduct and Standards Training was delivered in November 2025 for all Councillors – 20 Members attended. Members rated the session 4.8/5 in their feedback. Meeting Procedures/Chair’s training is planned for the New Year.
SR3. Consider amendments to the constitution to extend those procedural rules from to all meetings of committees of the Council and amend the Member Code of Conduct to include an obligation for all members to reinforce standards of behaviour and to support the Chair of the Council and chairs of committees in their use of procedure rules to ensure proper conduct. Group Leaders should model good behaviour and discipline	The Council has adopted the LGA model code and as stated above Chairs receive specific training.	Procedure rules apply to all meetings. Further review of the Code of Conduct will be undertaken when the pending new Government guidance is released, in line with recommendation from the CfGS. The Group Leader role profile is to be discussed 25 th September 2025 at a working group meeting.	Role Profiles for a range of roles (All Members, Leader, Deputy Leader, Exec Member, Committee Chair, Chair of Council, Vice Chair of Council, Group Leaders, Shadow Exec Members) considered at Constitution Working Group and drafted at meeting on 26 th November, expecting agreement at next meeting in mid-December.

members of their groups whose behaviour breaches the Code of Conduct and the member / officer protocol.			<p>Working Group also monitor the practical workings of the meetings procedures and have requested to review amendments procedure, notices of motion and public participation rules.</p> <p>Constitution “cheat sheet” of common issues created and attached to Chair’s Briefing notes as an aide memoir.</p>
SR4. Continue to provide information and support to ensure that members and officers who are subjected to aggressive and abusive behaviour from individual members can, if they wish, submit a written complaint to the Monitoring Officer immediately, so that it can be dealt with under the Council’s Standards procedures.	Members and officers are aware of the process to raise a Standards complaint and are supported to do so.	Ongoing.	<p>Ongoing via the Acting Monitoring Officer and Authorised Officer.</p> <p>Additional guidance – Arrangements for Dealing with Standards Complaints agreed by Governance Committee to support our work in dealing with complaints.</p> <p>New Councillor Conduct website to provide information to Members and the public: Councillor Conduct - Teignbridge District Council</p>
SR5. Ensure that Group Leaders take responsibility for their members working collaboratively with officers and for their members improving behaviours and relationships.	Agreed.	Noted and part of role profile.	Explicit in proposed role profile for Group Leaders.

SR6. Review membership of the Standards Committee, with only members who have an excellent behavioural track record being eligible to join it. Meetings should then resume. A Governance Committee should be introduced to reinforce the work of the Standards Committee. Governance Committee members must also have an unblemished behavioural track record.	Agreed.	Completed. Governance Committee approved at Council 29 th July 2025.	Governance Committee is now meeting quarterly and these dates are booked into the meeting calendar. Regular items include an update on Code of Conduct complaints, Member Training and the work of the Constitution Working Group.
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Key Recommendations:

Recommendation Feb 2025	Council Response Feb 2025	Update Sept 2025	Update December 2025
KR1. Members do not always understand which aspects of Council business they do or do not have access to by law. Members need to be clear about what they can and can not have access to. The Constitution outlines matters for meetings that members of the public are excluded from ("Part 2 meetings"). Where Part 2 meetings are used, all present should adhere to the legal confidentiality requirements of Part 2 meetings.	Noted and agreed. Officers will continue to work with Members to reiterate the importance of aspects of confidentiality and Part 2 meetings.	Members are made aware and breaches will be dealt with as a Code of Conduct issue.	Completed .
KR2. The Council should review arrangements around declarations of interest and investigations. An internal audit of interests should be arranged.	Noted. We will review and audit as part of our annual audit plan.	The Internal Audit review is currently in progress.	Completed. Internal audit final report issued 14 October 25 and recommendations due to be completed by December 2025.
KR3. Decision making arrangements at Executive Committee and Full Council level should be reviewed and, where necessary, strengthened. The planned	Agreed. We are currently progressing a decision flow chart.	In progress – in Monitoring Officer work plan.	Decision Making Guidance and flow chart for officers circulated to promote better understanding of the function of Full Council,

decision flowchart should be completed.			Executive, Overview and Scrutiny, etc. Democratic Services Manager works with officers to determine the correct route for any decisions/proposals.
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Improvement Recommendations:

Recommendation Feb 2025	Council Response Feb 2025	Update Sept 2025	Update December 2025
IR1. Peer Review Action Plan from 29/10/24 to be implemented and monitored.	Noted. This work is being revisited as part of the CFGS Working Group's agreed work programme.	See above.	See above.
IR2. The Council should continue with its return to Audit and Scrutiny Committee reviewing the risk register twice a year.	Agreed. This is being implemented within the work programme.	Completed.	Clarified with Grant Thornton this relates to the Audit Committee only. Overview and Scrutiny reviewed the risk register as part of their overall review of management information when compiling their Work Programme.
IR3. The Council should review the constitution to bring ToR of the Audit Scrutiny Committee into CIPFA best practice, including co-option of external independent member, election of opposition/independent chair, and renamed to remove term 'Scrutiny'.	The Constitution is being reviewed as part of the work with the CfGS. Independent member – remuneration agreed and job description / advertisement are ready to go.	Completed. Full Council agreed updated TOR and renaming 29 th July 2025. Independent member has been appointed.	Completed.
IR4. The Council should recognise good practice and consider the election of an opposition of independent member as chair of O&S	Agreed. The Council recognises what is generally considered to be best practice whereby an opposition member or independent is appointed as chair of O&S and	Not implemented.	Not implemented.

	consideration has been given to that. However, it also recognises it is guidance and the importance of having the right person in that role.		
IR5. The Council should continue to monitor progress with implementing a new finance system.	Agreed.	See above Peer Review comment – this project is now on hold pending LGR.	Project on hold.
IR6. Draft accounts for 24/25 should be published in line with statutory deadline, support by comprehensive set of working papers and capacity to support an audit to completion.	<p>Noted. Out timetable for 24/25 closedown works towards these revised dates.</p> <p>We are progressing sufficient staffing resources and will look to negotiate an external audit that takes place in a timely manner that doesn't clash with other key work or priorities.</p>	Completed. (Stat deadline exceeded by 4 days).	Completed.
IR7. The Council should seek to reduce its dependency on the Funding Reserve to close budget gaps, then stabilise its reserves over the medium term.	Agreed.	Modern 25 programme and Business Plan savings are ongoing.	The Council is developing the 26/27 budgets with successfully implemented savings built in for the first time. This and the funding review will soon allow us to assess how far we have come in closing the budget gap.
IR8. Maintain the arrangements now in place so that performance on non-major planning applications remains above the government's minimum target.	Agreed. The Council has implemented processes to maintain the current high level of performance. These arrangements are currently working well.	Completed. Performance remains above target: 94.3% of decision are within timescale for the year to date 29 August.	Completed.

Annual Governance Statement 2024-2025 Improvement Actions (ongoing)

Issue	Planned Action	Update October 2025	Update December 2025
<p><u>Financial Sustainability</u></p> <p>The risk of future financial sustainability remains due to high inflation having an impact on business cases, relatively high interest rates, and low growth. Ongoing uncertainty around future levels of government funding also cause concern.</p> <p>It is recognised that there is a significant deficit in our Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP). Consultants “Ignite” were appointed to assist us in developing a new operating model for the Council. This has now become the Council’s Modern 25 Programme which aims to deliver a proportion of the required savings.</p> <p>We have also updated our Strategic Asset Management Plan, following officer and members workshops, which will provide direction and clarity in the way we manage our land and buildings.</p>	<p>The Chief Financial Officer will continue to produce frequent analysis of the financial position and update the Strategic Leadership Team.</p> <p>Our Modernisation Programme M25, is ongoing with the aim of addressing the anticipated shortfalls. A re-structure of the Council’s Management Team has been completed in order to realign the management structure to the target operating model.</p> <p>A Task and Finish Group was instigated by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee to review the Medium Term Financial Plan with a view to closing the future predicted budget gap. This work will continue in 2025. Further detailed information is included in our Financial Plan.</p>	<p>The MTFP Review Group continues it’s work of reviewing service provision and charging with a view to identify savings.</p> <p>Savings from business plans are being identified and are being fed in to the budget setting process.</p> <p>We eagerly await the settlement from central government. We have modelled and assumed figures, but a big step towards understanding the future budget gap will be receiving actual numbers, hopefully before Christmas.</p>	<p>The MTFP Task Group made recommendations to Overview and Scrutiny on 11th November which were considered by the Executive on 2nd December.</p> <p>This shows the cross-party support for making the tough decisions necessary for bringing the council’s budget back into balance.</p>

Member and Officer roles and relationships

Good working relationships are crucial to good governance. The Council continued to experience challenges in this area during 2024/2025 resulting in [Statutory Recommendations](#) from external audit.

The Centre for Governance and Scrutiny (CfGS) were previously commissioned to review officer/member roles and responsibilities, including consideration of values, behaviours, and ethical issues, and the constitutional provisions supporting these.

The Peer Review completed in January 2024 had also made recommendations around enhancing communication and collaboration, strengthening trust and moral, and implementing methods for effective decision making. An action plan was subsequently agreed and submitted to full Council.

A new Member and Officer protocol was developed and agreed in July 2024, however the Constitution review remains a work in progress.

Work is ongoing to implement the recommendations from all independent reviews, particularly in respect of the Statutory Recommendations. Key actions remaining to be addressed in 2025-26 include:

- Commissioning a suitably qualified expert to investigate the underlying causes of member behaviours.
- Completing the Constitution Review. Workshops have previously been held on various topics and feedback from these will be used to inform a revised Constitution combined with the Statutory Recommendations. This will include review of the terms of reference of the Audit Scrutiny Committee, in accordance with CIPFA guidance.
- Continuing the enhanced member training programme.
- The Council's Corporate Governance Group and the Audit Committee continue to monitor the action plans.

Work has continued to implement the recommendations across all reviews and build better working relationships between Officers and Members:

- Hoey Ainscough and Associates have completed interviews relating to the Member Conduct Review. The final report is due to be presented at an All Member Briefing in December 2025.
- The Constitution Review Working Group has been commissioned for a second tranche of work and will meet every 3 weeks.
- A Member Development Strategy was approved at the Governance Committee on 2nd October 2025.
- The Council's Corporate Governance Group and the Audit Committee will continue to monitor the governance improvement action plans.

Work is continuing to improve Member and Officer relations. Anecdotally, Members from across all Groups have recognised the improving relationships between Members and between Members and Officers.

Hoey Ainscough and Associates will now present findings in January 2025.

<p><u>Cyber Security and Resilience , and use of Artificial Intelligence (AI)</u></p> <p>External cyber attack is an ever present threat and although we have mitigations in place to protect our infrastructure and systems, there is a continuing need to ensure we are in a state of preparedness.</p> <p>We are carefully exploring the use of certain AI technologies due to the potential benefits these may provide, whilst being mindful of the risks and challenges of doing so responsibly. All staff involved in AI trials have signed up to our AI policy setting out guidelines and their obligations to comply.</p>	<p>The Corporate Business Continuity Plan has been adopted by the Strategic Leadership Team (SLT).</p> <p>Service level plans have been produced by the 12 Heads of Service and have been reviewed by SLT.</p> <p>Heads of Service are currently enhancing cyber security content and a cyber security exercise is scheduled to test the adequacy of the corporate and service level plans. This will also include a test of the draft Strata disaster recovery and cyber incident response plans.</p>	<p>Following the review of service level plans by SLT, the requested health checks are being undertaken by the Emergency Planning and Business Continuity Officer and these are ongoing – it is planned to complete them by end of December 2025.</p> <p>A workshop exercise was carried out in September 2025 based on a simulated power outage. This tested how well Officers responded with limited connectivity.</p>	
<p><u>Planning Performance</u></p> <p>Our Planning service was under threat of being placed in special measures by the Department for Homes, Communities and Local Government (DHLUC) in December 2023 due to poor performance processing non major planning applications. Our compliance rate was 68.53% against a government target of 70%.</p>	<p>Following improvements in the Development Management service and confirmation in October 2024 that the service was no longer under the threat of designation, we have continued to work through our submitted action plan to ensure sustainable changes continue to be embedded and we have continued to reduce our dependency on temporary resources with successful recruitment into planning officer positions and a new team manager in addition to a new Head of Service.</p>	<p>Closed out / completed</p>	<p>Closed out / completed</p>

We continue to streamline our processes. Performance reports are produced in real time and used to drive performance. Training has been increased, including a town and parish forum, and in summer we will be hosting our first developer forum to help build our relationships with developers in order to improve our housing delivery.

Our next focus is on the pre-application part of the process to drive better quality developments through early, constructive dialogue. This will reduce pressures in the application process and provide greater confidence in the Council.

Government changed the performance indicator from a two year rolling figure to a one year figure. We currently stand a 96% on time or within extension of time (EOT) for non-major applications against a target of 70%. We also continue to reduce our reliance on EOT agreements quarter on quarter with more being determined within the statutory 8 week target.