

## Torridge Corporate Peer Challenge – Action Plan

Recommendation	Actions & Comments	Assigned to: Lead Member(s) SMT Lead (s) Support Officer	Target	Finish	Progress
<p>Levelling up Fund – consider what existing or new governance arrangements should be in place (to include key partners) to ensure governance is robust, the budget is monitored closely and importantly the wider benefits of this investment impact on the locality.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Review current arrangements for adequacy</li> <li>2. Review requirement contained within the Levelling Up Fund (LUF) bid and subsequent funding agreement</li> <li>3. Determine who the key partners are</li> <li>4. Establish / revise / implement arrangements</li> </ol>	<p>Cllr James Cllr Hicks Sean Kearney Staci Dorey</p>	<p>Jan-25 to fit in with start of contract works phase</p>	<p><b>Status - Amber</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The existing internal structure that exists sees a range of theme led individuals reporting to the project manager who then reports to senior management team.</li> <li>• Group Leaders have approved (subject to formal approval by Full Council at it's AGM) a Governance and Reporting Framework attached at Appendix 2.</li> <li>• The LUF bid included an external project steering group containing representatives from: Universities of Exeter &amp; Plymouth, Harland &amp; Woolf, Petroc, Bideford</li> </ul>

					<p>College, Appledore Primary School, Northam TC, Community and private sector representation with TDC officer and Member (Lead Member)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>This Board has yet to be established whilst the early procurement and planning work commences and will be revisited in Spring 2025.</li> </ul>
<p>Levelling Up Partnership – Address as a matter of urgency the capacity of the economic development team and major projects team to lead this scale of programme.</p>	<p><b>Notes:</b> External capacity had already been put in place to help the development work and plans were ready to execute further resource at the point of a potential Government announcement.</p> <p>Project costs include the cost of external resource input for implementation and delivery.</p> <p><b>Actions: Subject to Govt. approval of LUP:</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a review of all TDC led project resource requirements</li> <li>Analysis of project resources contained with TDC projects.</li> </ol>	<p>Cllr James Cllr Hicks Sean Kearney</p>	<p>TBD – depends on whether LUP will continue or not and any change to timeframe</p>	<p><b>Status - Amber</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Torrige Community Regeneration Partnership was announced 3 March 2025, with funding approved to March 2027.</li> <li>Full Council approved adding the £20.07m to the Capital Investment Programme the same day.</li> <li>Resource budget(s) included within allocated sums.</li> <li>Resources (external) allocated / secured to date: Legal, Planning, some project management and delivery, Communications (to be recruited)</li> <li>External delivery team already allocated and ready to be deployed for</li> </ul>

	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>3. Review wider resource requirements to ensure governance, legal and monitoring arrangements for non TDC projects are established and catered for.</li> <li>4. Develop recruitment proposals and plan.</li> </ol>				<p>Holsworthy Agri Business Centre project.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Work underway to identify resources requirements for other projects, which will be reported to the Governance Board (see appendix 2).</li> <li>• Overall resources plan being developed.</li> </ul>
<p>Levelling Up Partnership – An appraisal process is needed to ensure that the projects recommended not only meet the key metrics, but are deliverable, are sustainable in the long term and will make a real difference to outcomes locally.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Review and investigate appropriate level programme management systems</li> <li>2. Determine option that best fits and suits LUP</li> </ol>	<p>Cllr James Cllr Hicks Sean Kearney</p>	<p>TBD – depends on whether LUP will continue or not and any change to timeframe</p>	<p><b>Status – Amber</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The appraisal / business case process is developed and led by MHCLG and consideration of whether projects are deliverable will be considered as soon as the portfolio of projects is known.</li> <li>• The project / programme monitoring is currently being stood up by North Devon +, which will include a variety of performance and outcome monitoring data to ensure that the projects approved by MHCLG deliver the intended objectives.</li> <li>• These reports will follow the Governance and reporting framework (appendix 2)</li> </ul>

<p>Levelling Up Partnership – A clear governance structure is needed with roles, responsibilities and allocation of risk fully understood.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Review models of structures to properly manage projects.</li> <li>2. Investigate those that can be tailored to support the LUP projects in terms of consistency and standardisation.</li> </ol>	<p>Cllr James Cllr Hicks Sean Kearney</p>	<p>TBD – depends on whether LUP will continue or not and any change to timeframe</p>	<p><b>Status - Amber</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Governance and Reporting Framework established (Appendix 2)</li> <li>• Risk register being developed to be reported to next Major Projects Governance Board</li> </ul>
<p>Levelling Up Partnership – All projects within the wider LUP programme should follow a standard process, whether internal or external to the council.</p>			<p><b>Complete</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Governance and Reporting Framework established (Appendix 2)</li> </ul>	
<p>Take stock as to the sufficiency of the council's staff resources to continue to deliver everything that the council is seeking to do through the Strategic Plan as well as the resources needed to support delivery of major project programmes.</p>	<p><b>Notes:</b> Significant capacity concerns were raised specifically in the context of a potential funding award via the Levelling up Partnership (LUP) of £20m and the deadline for delivery (31<sup>st</sup> March 2025).</p> <p>External capacity had already been put in place to help the development work and plans were ready to execute further resource at the point of a potential Government announcement.</p> <p>Capacity concerns have been further raised in relation to the existing programme of major projects and delivery of the Strategic Plan priorities – “capacity will be a significant challenge”</p>	<p>Cllr James Steve Hearse Sarah Ayres</p>	<p>Oct-24</p>	<p><b>Status - Amber</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Torridge Community Regeneration Partnership was announced 3 March 2025, with funding approved to March 2027.</li> <li>• Full Council approved adding the £20.07m to the Capital Investment Programme the same day.</li> <li>• External project delivery team already in place for Appledore Clean Maritime Innovation Centre</li> <li>• External project delivery team ready to be deployed for Holsworthy Agri Business Centre Project</li> <li>• Resource / procurement plans under development for other internal projects</li> <li>• Resources currently in place for Legal, Planning</li> </ul>

	<p><b>Actions:</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Review and map current / future levels of activity across major projects already in progress alongside the associated deadlines where applicable.</li> <li>2. Identify programmes &amp; projects approved yet to commence and without resource plans.</li> <li>3. Develop resource requirements for (3.) and identify resource gaps</li> <li>4. Determine to either input extra resource or review scheduling / priority of projects and programmes.</li> </ol>				<p>and approval in place to recruit additional Communications support.</p>
Recommendation	Comments	Assigned to	Target	Finish	Progress

<p>Create a Member Development Working Group to empower councillors to drive their own development and address low attendance at councillor learning and development sessions. Invest in an ongoing programme of councillor development and political awareness training for staff, to ensure wider understanding of the roles and responsibilities of councillors and officers respectively. Include training using the resources available to promote Civility in Public Life to address instances of poor councillor behaviour.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Determine and agree make up of MDWG working group</li> <li>Agree a set of terms of reference for MDWG</li> <li>Identify areas of training required</li> <li>Identify resources &amp; support requirements – internal &amp; external</li> <li>MDWG agree a set of actions</li> <li>Review Member induction process / schedule of training</li> <li>Identify and consider areas of concern of poor Councillor behaviour and determine options / actions to improve this area.</li> </ol> <p><b>This is separate to the MDWG</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Political awareness for staff – identify staff to include in training, identify trainer and schedule.</li> </ol>	<p>Cllr Newton Staci Dorey Tom Vanstone</p> <p>Cllr James Steve Hearse Sarah Ayres</p>	<p>Dec-24</p>	<p><b>Status – Amber</b></p> <p><b>Red action 7 and Green action 8</b></p> <p><b>Completed</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Liaison with LGA to provide support to the group. Kathryn Trant (Lead from LGA on CPC) assigned.</li> <li>MDWG approved by Full Council – Group Leaders</li> <li>Terms of reference agreed by MDWG.</li> <li>MDWG supported by Chief Executive, Head of Legal &amp; Governance and Senior Elections and Democratic Services Officer.</li> <li>Agreed work programme</li> <li>Member induction process and training review commenced</li> <li>Item / action 7 – no specific work has been developed on this subject</li> </ul> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Training took place Wednesday 22 January 2025</li> </ul>
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<p>Undertake a review of process and procedures such as the Leadership Team meetings, Lead Member roles, use of Full Council Motions, Call In, Scheme of Delegation and appropriate use of Part Two to ensure effective decision-making processes and governance that is widely understood across the council.</p>	<p><b>Notes:</b>                  In constitution Leadership appears to a much more powerful “Committee” than it is as has no delegated responsibilities – so what is its’ purpose needs reviewing and redefining as necessary</p> <p>Is it “Leadership” as all Councillors can attend and participate?</p> <p>Lack of clarity and purpose of Lead Members – from reports to Committees, championing role and policy input</p> <p>Review of other parts of Constitution and their role in developing policy and governance purpose – Motions, Call ins and Part 2</p> <p><b>Actions:</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Determine and agree make up of working group – should there be just one group covering this and Member Development?</li> <li>2. Consider the need and whether external support (LGA) would provide</li> </ol>	<p>Cllr James                  Cllr Newton                  Steve Hearse                  Staci Dorey                  Tom Vanstone</p>	<p>May-25                  This will fit in with annual reporting of Constitution to Councils AGM</p>	<p><b>Status - Amber</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Liaison with LGA to provide support to the group. Kathryn Trant (Lead from LGA on CPC) assigned.</li> <li>• Working Group approved by Full Council – MDWG is all Group Leaders.</li> <li>• No direct support / required / requested by MDWG</li> <li>• Scope of review agreed at initial meeting.</li> <li>• Terms of reference for MDWG approved.</li> <li>• Timetable developed and meetings scheduled</li> <li>• To date MDWG has reviewed:</li> </ul> <p>The MDWG has approved (subject to approval by Full Council) to be reported as update to Constitution in May 2025</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Remove Leadership Team</li> <li>• Implement a Group Leaders / SMT Governance Board for major project works</li> <li>• Implement Member Briefings and diarised bi-monthly</li> </ul>
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	<p>added value and assurance to the project.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>3. Agree the scope of the review to be conducted.</li> <li>4. Approve the terms of reference for the group and the review.</li> <li>5. Develop a timetable / plan for the areas to be reviewed.</li> <li>6. Schedule the working group meetings.</li> <li>7. Report recommendations to Full Council for changes to constitution.</li> </ol>				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Implemented new programme of training</li> <li>• Member development programme</li> </ul> <p>Outstanding areas to be discussed at MDWG on 4 April 2025</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Notices of motion</li> <li>• Planning call ins</li> <li>• Roles of Lead Members in absence of Leadership Team</li> </ul>
Recommendation	Comments	Assigned to	Target	Finish	Progress
<p>Formalise statutory officer meetings and develop a forward work programme around governance issues to include the Annual Governance Statement and the corporate risk register. Meeting regularly would allow for sharing of information and development of a 'united' approach to governance issues.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Agree format and timing of meetings</li> <li>2. Agree areas of work that should make up the work programme</li> <li>3. Schedule meetings</li> <li>4. Continued review of actions and mechanisms highlighting work completed</li> </ol>	<p>Cllr James Steve Hearse</p>	<p>Sep-24</p>	<p><b>Complete</b></p>	<p>First two meetings already taken place – 3<sup>rd</sup> June &amp; 8<sup>th</sup> July.</p> <p>Meet 1<sup>st</sup> Monday of every month.</p> <p>Notes held in secure corporate folder</p> <p>Will cover:</p>



	<p>5. Relocate Finance Manager / s151 Officer to 1<sup>st</sup> Floor RBH with other statutory officers / SMT</p>				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Annual Governance Statement</li> <li>• Corporate Risk Management</li> <li>• Internal Audit reporting – recommendations and action plan monitoring</li> <li>• External Audit reporting – recommendations and action plan monitoring</li> <li>• Constitution reviews and updates</li> <li>• Other Governance matters as arise</li> <li>• Head of Finance relocated to 1<sup>st</sup> Floor RBH</li> </ul>
<p>Develop a transparent mechanism for seeking efficiencies and income generation to replace the use of Reserves in the Medium Term Financial Strategy. Action the improvement recommendations set out in the external auditor’s annual report.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Member Budget working group – encourage greater attendance</li> <li>2. Finding of MBWG to be communicated more widely</li> <li>3. MTFS update report to Full Council - November 2024 to identify current gap.</li> <li>4. Consider role and purpose of MBWG to plug the gap identified.</li> <li>5. Prepare action and options for consideration.</li> </ol>	<p>Cllr Bushby Gordon Bryant</p>	<p>Feb-25 This will meet the date for the next MTFS to be reported to Full Council as part of the annual budget process</p>	<p><b>Status - Red</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• MBWG – last meeting (02 August 2024) only 2 of the 6 political groups were represented.</li> <li>• Full Member Budget briefing took place to discuss TDC’s financial position and to consider options for savings, efficiencies and, of income generation on 19 December 2024 – only 10 of 36 Members attended</li> <li>• Raised with Group Leaders (07 March) to discuss at next meeting on 4 April 2025.</li> </ul>

<p>Strengthen how management of corporate risks is reviewed and reported to ensure it is transparent and implications linked to the Medium Term Financial Strategy.</p>	<p><b>Notes:</b> To ensure that there is greater oversight and reporting of corporate risks.</p>	<p>Cllr Bushby Gordon Bryant</p>		<p><b>Complete</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Corporate Risk Register is now reported to Leadership. <i>(subject to change as role of Leadership may change)</i></li> <li>• The Corporate Risk Group has been reconstituted.</li> <li>• A summarised version of the CRR is now presented in Part 1 of the A &amp; G meetings for public perusal.</li> <li>• Corporate risks around revenue and capital budgets has been strengthened.</li> </ul>
<p>Proactively engage with partners to ensure that TDC is in a position to maximise the opportunities that may arise from the various partnerships that the council is involved in.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Identify key strategic partnerships</li> <li>2. Confirm who attends and ensure substitute is available if main attendee not available</li> </ol>	<p>Cllr James Steve Hearse</p>	<p>Ongoing</p>	<p><b>Complete</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Regular meetings scheduled with North Devon Council – Leader, Deputy Leader and CEX</li> <li>• Leader &amp; CEX attend Northern Devon Futures and One Northern Devon Strategic Partnership Boards</li> <li>• Leader &amp; CEX attend Team Devon and Devon Districts Forum</li> <li>• Leader and Deputy Leader hold positions on the Devon &amp; Torbay County Combined Authority &amp; CEX</li> </ul>

					represents on the Employment & Skills Advisory Board
<p>Embed clear performance measurements and milestones into service plans to meet the council's carbon neutral operational target of 2030, to demonstrate on track delivery.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Identify all the projects and work programmes that incorporate carbon reduction ambitions and actions.</li> <li>2. Map the performance measurements and milestones attributable to each and the service area.</li> <li>3. Update Business Plan template to capture and identify projects and work programmes that contribute to carbon reduction.</li> <li>4. Include projects identified in the production of the 2025 Business Plans</li> </ol>	<p>Cllr Hames Sean Kearney</p>	<p>Feb-25 This will fit with the production of the 2025-26 Business Plans</p>	<p><b>Status - Amber</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Updated Carbon Footprint reported to C&amp;R 20 Jan 2025 – confirmed off target for 2030.</li> <li>• Changes to the service business plan format have been made to ensure that climate change/ carbon reduction measures are now embedded with the document. Operational Managers in partnership with service lead members can agree the individual actions included. This will act as a delivery tracker and provide data for presentation within the QBR.</li> <li>• Overview &amp; Scrutiny reviewing Project Initiation Document to improve the climate section and consider weightings for scoring</li> </ul>
Recommendation	Comments	Assigned to	Target	Finish	Progress

<p>Review HR policies, terms and conditions and working arrangements, to address actual or perceived inconsistencies in their application across different council services and to ensure that the council is seen as an attractive place to work.</p>	<p>The process of reviewing the Council's HR policies was already underway prior to the Corporate Peer Challenge taking place.</p> <p>The exercise had been delayed due to an absence of union representation both within Torridge DC and regionally, which has now been partially resolved.</p> <p>The HR Strategy is also under review, which sets out the framework within which we will make employment related decisions over the next 3 years.</p>	<p>Cllr James Steve Hearse Sarah Ayres</p>	<p>-Oct-24</p>	<p><b>Complete</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Human Resources Team have reviewed and updated as necessary 26 HR Policies and introduced 2 new policies (Menopause and Secondary Employment)</li> <li>• The team met with union representatives from Unison and GMB to discuss and agree any amendments</li> <li>• 27 of the 28 HR Policies were approved at the Staff Forum on Tuesday 23<sup>rd</sup> July 2024.</li> <li>• Only the Menopause Policy is outstanding as it is still being updated.</li> <li>• The refreshed policies will now be implemented on 1 September following their introduction at the People Managers Meetings scheduled in August.</li> <li>• The HR Strategy is currently being worked on, which is due to be presented at Internal Overview &amp; Scrutiny Committee in September 2024.</li> </ul>
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<p>Improve external communications so that the council can proactively celebrate its success. Continue to develop a Strategic Communications Plan to ensure consistent messaging through internal and external communications at the same time.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Review external communications strategy and plans</li> <li>2. Focus on gathering positive / success stories and publicise</li> <li>3. Review staff internal communications through staff focus group</li> <li>4. Review Councillors internal communications through Member Development Working Group</li> </ol>	<p>Cllr James Steve Hearse Sarah Ayres</p>	<p>Dec-24</p>	<p><b>Status – Amber.</b></p> <p><b>Actions 1 to 3 Complete</b></p> <p><b>Action 4 - outstanding</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Communication plans for major projects are now developed</li> <li>• Annual Report for 2023-24 developed and reported to Full Council on 3 March 2025</li> <li>• Communications lead officer now attends major project meetings and Place Board</li> <li>• Staff newsletter now published on a fortnightly basis instead of monthly</li> <li>• Communications lead meets regularly with the Leader of the Council</li> <li>• Communications is a standing agenda item on Senior Management Team agenda and Communications and HR Manager attends each week.</li> <li>• Various Communications channels in place following a review and refresh of member communications – Group Leaders to review at meeting 4 April 2025</li> </ul>
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