TEES VALLEY

Tees Valley Combined Authority Organisational Improvement Plan Update – July 2026

In response to the Best Value Notice issued to TVCA in April 2025, together with its partners, TVCA has created an Improvement Plan and ongoing Action Plan to address the matters set out within the notice and to ensure it has robust approaches across the five key themes of the plan:

Partnerships • Use of Resources • Governance • Culture • Continuous Improvement

In addition to the Best Value Notice, the ongoing action plan includes actions in relation to points raised by the External Auditor in the Statutory letter received in April 2025 which are addressed in the Use of Resources section of this update.

The table below shows a high-level summary of progress per theme, detailed updates per action are documented throughout the update, the next full progress report is due to be presented to TVCA Cabinet in September 2026.

Theme	Total actions	Complete	Complete – ongoing steps to embed	In progress – nearing completion	In progress	Not started	Progress overall
Partnerships	3	3	0	0	0	0	100%
Use of Resources	4	1	2	1	0	0	75%
Governance	18	9	2	6	1	0	61%
Culture	14	7	5	2	0	0	86%
Continuous Improvement	4	2	0	2	0	0	50%
Total % complete							**72%**

Note: The figures in the summary table are intended to provide a rounded indication of delivery status across each theme. The overall progress indicator reflects the balance of actions that are complete or complete with ongoing steps to embed. Almost complete and in progress actions are not included within the progress overall and should be read alongside the detailed narrative set out in this update. In progress - nearing completion refers to actions that are due to be complete in August or September 2026. It is anticipated that 97% of actions will be either complete or complete with ongoing steps to embed by the end of September 2026, to note actions relating to adoption of the Single Assurance Framework are reliant on external factors as detailed within this update.

TVCA is committed to continuous improvement. Completed actions are embedded within wider organisational improvement implementation and organisational operations to further strengthen functions, processes and long-term organisational resilience. In June 2026, TVCA Cabinet noted the intention to develop and implement a continuous improvement strategy, this will be presented to TVCA Cabinet in September 2026.

To note, the action relating to undertaking a Peer Review in 18–24 months has been omitted from the summary table because it has been identified as an action for future consideration, with timing dependent on the next steps associated with the Best Value Notice.

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Partnerships						
Actions complete						
Refocus the Chief Executives meetings into a Tees Valley Strategic Leadership Team, made up of the six chief executives (5 LAs and 1 CA, CEXs) supporting the delivery of priority workstreams						
Accountable Director	**Initially identified key steps**	**Key Milestones/Progress June 2025-July 2026**	**Ongoing steps to embed**	**Revised dates (if applicable)**	**Overarching measure of success**	**Evidence**
TB	• Undertake a review of the TV CEXs meetings, priorities and Terms of Reference, implement changes from the review appropriately and reflect any changes in the governance structure and corporate calendar of the wider organisation and embed changes to processes.	• TV CEX meeting is now a standing item on TVCA ELT to ensure strategic alignment with TVCA key priorities • TV CEX continue to meet monthly with TVCA bringing Strategic Priorities for discussion. • TV CEXs meeting is part of the TVCA formal Cabinet cycle • Strategic forward plan discussed with CEX • July 2026 – Further discussions held with the CEX Group regarding its role and function under the revised governance arrangements, with the agreed approach to be reflected within the refreshed Constitution.	• TVCA CEO to continue to work strategically with the TV CEXs group. This action has moved beyond the initial improvement phase and will now be managed within business-as-usual processes to ensure improvements are embedded, sustained and further developed.		• Implementation of Tees Valley Strategic Leadership Team meetings • Positive feedback and demonstrable impact of the working arrangements received. **Impact** • Collective leadership and strategic alignment • More coordinated and efficient delivery of priority workstreams • Earlier identification and resolution of cross-organisational risks	• CEX Agendas **Potential impact indicators** • Attendance and active participation of members • Progress against shared priority workstreams • Feedback from members, delivery partners, external reviewers
Implement a collaborative approach to strategic long-term priority setting and planning, working closely with the constituent local authorities, with meaningful political engagement at the outset and throughout the process.						
Accountable Director	**Initially identified key steps**	**Key Milestones/Progress June 2025-July 2026**	**Ongoing steps to embed**	**Revised dates (if applicable)**	**Overarching measure of success**	**Evidence**
TB	•Implement a series of workshops for priority setting •Engage key partners and Members •Ensure the workshops fit with the corporate calendar.	•12-month forward plan has been developed in collaboration with Cabinet. •12-month forward plan developed for Overview & Scrutiny Committee and Audit & Governance Committee. •Overview & Scrutiny Improvement Plan and Work Programme developed and approved by the Committee on 19 November 2025. •Audit & Governance Committee work programme and enhancement plan agreed by the committee on 27 November 2025. •Collaborative approach implemented to the development of strategic priorities in advance of Cabinet decisions, led by the portfolio holder and involving key stakeholders. Examples of positive feedback on the new collaborative approach from both portfolio holders and stakeholders, for instance the development of the new approach to adult skills provision and the development of the Get Tees Valley Working Plan, where the collaborative approach taken was described as an exemplar in local partnership delivery by the Department for Work and Pensions. •New committee report development process implemented, with pre-committee engagement. • June 2026 - The Mayor and TVCA officers worked with Cabinet members to refine portfolios ahead	This action has moved beyond the initial improvement phase and will now be managed within business-as-usual processes to ensure improvements are embedded, sustained and further developed. This will ensure robust strategic planning for all committees and informal engagement in advance of meetings linked to strategic priorities.		• Partners and key stakeholders understand long-term plans and provide positive/improved feedback on meaningful engagement. **Impact** • Strengthened alignment between TVCA and constituent LAs • Improved buy-in to agreed priorities • More effective use of collective resources	**Potential impact indicators** • Evidence of political involvement e.g. workshops, joint sessions • Formal agreement and commitment to shared priorities • Improved confidence from members and senior officers

		of the Annual General Meeting (AGM) in June. Revised portfolios were approved to strengthen alignment with TVCA's strategic priorities. Further details are provided within the Governance section of this report. • July 2026 - Business Tees Valley Programme, which was presented and approved by TVCA Cabinet in July, provides further evidence of collaborative working and an improved processes for decision-making.				
Implement a balanced external communications plan to ensure TVCA restores public confidence, promotes itself and manages challenge & external scrutiny, with a greater role for Cabinet portfolio holders.						
Accountable Director	**Initially identified key steps**	**Key Milestones/Progress June 2025-July 2026**	**Ongoing steps for implementation**	**Revised dates (if applicable)**	**Overarching measure of success**	**Evidence**
CP	• Engage Partners and Stakeholders to develop a plan • Work with Partners and Stakeholders to implement and embed plan	• Reinstated regular Heads of Communications meetings with TVCA and five local authorities • Terms of Reference for group established with rolling chair to maintain shared ownership • Increased visibility of Cabinet portfolio leads in press articles and media opportunities, plus MP engagement • Increased engagement and visibility led by ELT with the business community • Working with the Local Government Association Head of Communications Improvement • Agreed scope of support to be provided by LGA specialists • Development of strategy now in progress alongside LGA • LGA held interviews in December with local authority leaders and chief executives • Communications Strategy workshop held with TVCA and LA Heads of Communications on 14 January • Draft strategy shared with Dame Amanda Milling of the Independent Advisory Board for feedback • 10 March 2026 - Draft strategy shared with TVCA Executive Leadership Team • May 2026 - Business Board established • May 2026 - Development of perceptions survey underway • May 2026 - Draft strategy shared with partners (LA leaders) • June 2026 - external communications strategy finalised and ready for full implementation from July 2026. • July 2026 – Plan fully implemented. • July 2026 – Plan added as standing agenda item on Tees Valley Head of Comms meetings to enable ongoing collaborative review and continuous improvement.	This action has moved beyond the initial improvement phase and will now be managed through Continuous Improvement to ensure improvements are embedded, sustained and further developed.		• Clear, easily accessible information for the public that meets with legislation and best practice **<u>Impact</u>** • Improvement in public perception and confidence • Strengthened leadership visibility and accountability for portfolio holders • Reduction in reactive communications	• Engagement plan •TOR of group •Examples of press releases which show increased visibility of Cabinet portfolio leads **<u>Potential impact indicators</u>** • Media sentiment analysis (positive v negative coverage) • Number of FoI requests • Public engagement metrics • Portfolio holder feedback
Use of Resources						

Actions complete						
Ensure that all actions from audit reports are addressed in an effective and timely manner and progress is reported to Audit & Governance (A&G) Committee and Cabinet.						
Accountable Director	**Initially identified key steps**	**Key Milestones/Progress Jue 2025-July 2026**	**Ongoing steps for implementation**	**Revised dates (if applicable)**	**Overarching measure of success**	**Evidence**
JM	• External Audit recommendations evidenced as complete with Auditors	•Close engagement and transparent reporting to the TVCA Audit & Governance Committee to ensure they are kept up to date with progress. •S73 officer improving relationships with External Auditors as described above. •The formal reporting to TVCA A&G and TVCA Cabinet will follow the approved plan. •This requires reports to be produced for circulation with these stakeholders for May, June, September and November. •Revised approach agreed to statutory backstop date of 27 February 2026. •Updates and progress will be reported to Cabinet & A&G Committee. •Training sessions held with A&G Members and meeting held with Chair pre-publication • May 2026 - External audit progress update provided to A&G committee • July 2026 – Requirements and expectations of A&G committee incorporated into member induction/training process.	This action has moved beyond the initial improvement phase and will now be managed within business-as-usual processes to ensure improvements are embedded, sustained and further developed.		External Audit recommendations evidenced as complete with Auditors. **Impact** • Strengthened assurance, accountability and control • Improved transparency • Improved oversight of risk management and improvement activity • Reduced risk of repeat findings and external challenge	**Potential impact indicators** • Actions are progressed within agreed timescales • Regular, clear progress reports presented to A&G and Cabinet • Clear senior ownership for audit actions and evidence of active management • Fewer repeat actions in subsequent audit reports
Actions complete – ongoing steps to embed.						
Respond effectively and in a timely manner to address the recommendations and actions contained within the external auditor's statutory letter received on 15 April 2025						
Accountable Director	**Initially identified key steps**	**Key Milestones/Progress June 2025-July 2026**	**Ongoing steps for implementation**	**Revised dates (if applicable)**	**Overarching measure of success**	**Evidence**
JM	• Capacity review – *addressed under workforce development actions* • Process review – *addressed under review of finance processes and procedures* • Clear timetable for production of its 2024/25 Statement of Accounts	• Close working relationship established with EY, including regular dialogue with senior officers to jointly resolve outstanding queries on material matters. • 2024/25 published by the statutory deadline of 30 June 2025 • TVCA is working closely with EY to conclude the 2023/24 and 2024/25 external audit processes to enable signing of the accounts by the Interim Section 73 Officer and for EY to issue their disclaimed audit opinion. • All material matters and transactions have been subject to group discussion and agreement. • Two material matters discussed with CIPFA for assurance and clarification. • Significant progress has been made in reviewing and restating the TVCA 2023/24 and 2024/25 accounts, as well as the accounts for all other group entities. • Appropriate and robust working papers have been prepared to support the financial	•Ongoing - Work will continue at pace to work closely with the external auditor to satisfy their queries raised and to enable the audit process for 2023/24 and 2024/25 to be concluded as soon as practicable.		• All public inspection periods for the Annual Financial Statements (including narrative report) and Annual Governance Statement are complied with in line with legislation • All year-end statutory deadlines met for the production of Annual Financial Statements (including narrative report) and Annual Governance Statement to deliver before the backstop date **Impact** • Strengthened governance, financial management and internal controls	**Potential impact indicators**

		statements. • Public accounts inspection requirements are now understood and were fully complied with. • A capacity review was undertaken by the Interim Section 73 Officer. • The Interim Section 73 Officer commenced at the end of July 2025, prioritising capacity issues and the completion of prior-year accounts. • Additional suitably experienced interim resources have been deployed to resolve remaining 2024/25 matters. • A further experienced interim lead for 2025/26 year-end processes commenced in December. • A comprehensive, integrated workbook has been developed to underpin the production of the final accounts, and this workbook clearly tracks all adjustments made to the draft accounts published on 30 June 2025. It also includes control and integrity checks to ensure accuracy and consistency of amounts reflected in the accounts. • Close engagement with and transparent reporting to the TVCA Audit & Governance Committee • February 2026 - TVCA submitted 7 of the 8 entities' accounts by the statutory backstop date of 27 February 2026. • May 2026 - Progress update on conclusion of accounts for 2023/24 and 2024/25, and draft accounts for 2025/26 provided to A&G Committee • TVCA single entity accounts, STDC group, HDC & MDC single accounts were published by the publication deadline. The unaudited draft TVCA Group Accounts will be published as soon as reasonably practicable. The Authority is working with the external auditors to resolve all prior years matters' as soon as possible which will then enable the 2025/26 TVCA Draft Group Accounts to be published.			• Improvement in auditor confidence and reduced risk of repeat findings in future audit cycles • Improved organisational credibility • Demonstrable commitment to improvement	• Actions are progressed within agreed timescales • Feedback from external auditor(s) • Clear senior ownership for recommendations and evidence of completed actions • No repeat findings in subsequent audit reports

Develop and implement a workforce development strategy, to ensure a sustainable and high-performing finance function.

Accountable Director	Initially identified key steps	Key Milestones/Progress June 2025-July 2026	Ongoing steps for implementation	Revised dates (if applicable)	Overarching measure of success	Evidence
JM	•Produce a baseline of Finance Team Capacity and Capability. Produce Terms of Reference for review of Finance team and approval by Cabinet. •Benchmarking analysis and review by Tees Valley Strategic Resources Group (FDs) for feedback. •SWOT analysis and local government finance workforce action plan key recommendations analysis performed to support review of the	• The Interim Finance & Resources Director was appointed in July 2025 and undertook an immediate review of the short-term requirements. • This review concluded that the existing team was small and flat in structure, with no separation of the three key elements of a full finance function: • financial management • financial accounting & reporting • treasury management • Additionally, the skillset and experience of team members were not necessarily aligned with activity being undertaken.	• Recruitment of permanent Finance & Resources Director (S73) officer • May 2026 onwards Transition from the interim finance arrangements		• The Finance team has a clear structure building on current capabilities to ensure an appropriately qualified team and a development pathway to a resilient high performing service.	

	Finance Team. •Formulation of Finance Team structure options and funding requirements as applicable and recommendations to TVCA Senior Leadership Team and stakeholder groups.	• August–September 2025 - An interim structure was established. • Interim resource has been secured to ensure that the team is fit for purpose in the short term. • Additional specialist support has been brought in where necessary, with resources added on a controlled, as-needed basis. • This interim structure has been designed to undertake the full financial review and implement the improvements needed. • Formulation of the finance team structure has been developed by the Interim Group Director of Finance and Resources with support from HR. • Staff are now assigned to one of the three functions noted above, improving clarity and accountability. • Dedicated resource aligned to finance processes and improvements. • November 2025 - Updated structure discussed with the Executive Leadership Team (ELT) • December 2025 - Shared with the IAB as part of the Use of Resources Deep Dive given on 8 December 2025. • Extension to contract agreed with interim Finance & Resources Director as the S73 recruitment process in Q1 2026 did not result in an appointment • Governance and appointments report made to Cabinet on 24 April 2026 to inform that no appointment could be made – details provided of extended interim arrangements • April 2026: Proposed structure and recruitment needs for the finance function presented to CEO and business case prepared for new structure • May 2026: Update on status of Director recruitment provided to IAB • May 2026: Proposed structure for finance team presented to IAB. • May 2026: LGA retention maturity model being adopted as part of workforce development plan • June 2026 - Cabinet received an update on progress with recruitment to the permanent Finance Director role. • July 2026 – Recruitment for finance team vacancies has commenced.			**Impact** • Finance function better equipped to meet organisational needs • Improved recruitment, retention and skills development • Reduced reliance on interim or ad-hoc capacity • Improved quality of financial advice to members and senior leaders	**Potential impact indicators** • Improved retention rates and reduced interim reliance in finance function • Evidence that finance staff have the right skills and competencies to support function • Improved feedback from senior officers, members and auditors on quality of financial advice • Identified succession plans for key finance roles and reduced single-point dependency risks • Fewer finance-related audit issues
Actions in progress – nearing completion						

Review all finance processes and procedures and implement any necessary changes to ensure exemplar finance best practice, capture changes within the Constitution and improve awareness and understanding across the organisation.						
Accountable Director	**Initially identified key steps**	**Key Milestones/Progress June 2025-July 2026**	**Next steps and dates**	**Revised dates (if applicable)**	**Overarching measure of success**	**Evidence**
JM	• Produce a baseline assessment of finance processes and procedures and 'gap analysis' where applicable to form the basis of future improvement plan. • Cabinet approval of finance process changes as required in line with Constitution. • Roll out of processes across the organisation (including all necessary awareness raising and training). • Implementation of the necessary system changes to reflect the new sub-scheme of delegation. • Roll out training for all new budget holders and individuals with delegations. Roll out training for document authorisation system.	•Review of finance processes undertaken and complete. This includes Budget monitoring, finance accounting monthly control process, treasury management and cash management. •Process owners assigned •Dedicated resource within the Finance team who has responsibility for documenting and tracking processes and improvements made. •The Local Government Association (LGA) have been engaged to provide additional support on key process improvement. •Process tracker developed, updated and shared with the IAB. •New budget setting process implemented for 2025/26. •April 2026 - A new budget timetable to be created and to be implemented for 2026/2027. •April 2026 onwards - Implementation of programme of process improvements has commenced • May 2026 - Internal working group in place to map and document all updated finance processes to support roll out across organisation • May 2026 - Planned procurement process being considered for external review of processes and procedures • June 2026 - EOI and specification for external review of processes and procedures drafted to be out for procurement in July. • July 2026: Updated corporate policies presented to Cabinet [Anti-Fraud, Bribery & Corruption and Anti-Money Laundering] and approved.	•Continue to update and implement revised processes. •July 2026: Arrange procurement of external review of all finance processes and procedures. To assess effectiveness, efficiency and robustness as well as alignment with CIPFA good practice and SOLACE principles of good governance •July – September 2026 - Constitution changes to be updated as part of the constitution review.		• Fully documented finance business processes and procedure documentation is widely available and understood by staff • Ownership and accountability is demonstrated through budget holder leadership for their respective areas of delegated authority. • Document authorisation processes are compliant, timely and accurate working to agreed service standards across the Group **Impact** • Improved consistency, control and compliance • Improved clarification of roles and responsibilities to reduce ambiguity and governance risk • Better financial discipline and more informed decision making among officers and members	**Potential impact indicators** • Updated finance processes and procedures are documented, approved and operational • Constitutional updates are complete and reflected in financial decision making and scheme of delegation • Reduction in finance-related audit issues • Feedback from auditors, officers and members in relation to understanding (and reduction in errors/escalations)

Governance						
Actions complete						
Undertake a comprehensive review of the TVCA Assurance Framework, taking into account best practice, working closely with the constituent local authorities and Cabinet, and implement any necessary changes to ensure it remains fit for purpose.						
Accountable Director	**Initially identified key steps**	**Key Milestones/Progress June 2025-July 2026**	**Ongoing steps to embed**	**Revised dates (if applicable)**	**Overarching measure of success**	**Evidence**
JMc/SB	• Undertake an internal review of the Assurance Framework. Work with partners and Members to update. Seek Cabinet approval.	• The Assurance Framework has been identified as a priority area for improvement. • Best practice centres around the development of a Single Assurance Framework (SAF), which will enable Tees Valley Combined Authority to address issues, introduce a new approach and culture to approvals	• A phased approach to the implementation of the Constitution and governance review is in place with key milestones of April, June, July, September and November Cabinet meetings.	The indicative timescale for SAF adoption has been revised from 26 June 2026 to September 2026 –	Approval of updated Assurance Framework. Data is available providing evidence of effective assurance processes.	• Delivery of Single Assurance Framework. • Approval of SAF by MHCLG and other government departments. • Completed annual reviews as required.

		and drive standards. • An initial assessment of the existing Assurance Framework by the Interim Monitoring Officer in September 2025 concluded that the existing framework is in need of redesign, with opportunities to strengthen it. •A SAF provides opportunities to deal with the uniqueness and nuances of the Tees Valley set up of Mayoral Development Corporations. •Tees Valley Specific Design Principles have been developed. •Engaged with the Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government (MHCLG) to align design principles. •Cabinet has endorsed the approach and design principles for the development of a SAF on 12 December 2025 •Audit and Governance committee considered design principles on 20 February 2026. • 1 April 2026: Presentation to Cabinet workshop • 24 April 2026 - Draft of SAF presented to Cabinet and approved for submission to government departments for clearance • April 2026 - Draft SAF submitted to MHCLG for review following Cabinet endorsement • May-June 2026 - Individual engagement sessions with Cabinet members included update and next steps for SAF. • May 2026 - Internal working group established to ensure internal adoption of SAF. • 26 June 2026 - Internal implementation plan to support adoption of the approved SAF developed, ensuring alignment across the organisation and other actions in this plan, including the Constitution review. • June 2026 - Responded to first round of clarification questions from Government. • July 2026 - Continued development and testing of the SAF by the Implementation Sub-Group to support readiness for adoption.	The indicative timescale for final SAF approval has been required to be revised from the initial indicative date of June 2026 to allow for MHCLG review and feedback. Cabinet update report will be provided to September Cabinet – in line with anticipated key milestones but subject to MHCLG comments and approval.	subject to MHCLG comments and approval	**<u>Impact</u>** • Improved confidence that risks, controls and governance arrangements are identified, managed and monitored effectively • Reduced gaps, duplication and inconsistencies across the system • Enhanced clarity of roles and responsibilities • Strengthened links between risk management, audit, performance and decision making	**<u>Potential impact indicators</u>** • Revised Assurance Framework is approved • Demonstrable links between risk management, audit, performance reporting and governance processes • Evidence of engagement and agreement from Cabinet and constituent local authorities • Feedback from members, auditors and senior management in relation to confidence in assurance position
Review the Cabinet decision making process and implement any necessary changes to ensure meaningful political engagement at the outset, including presenting Members with thorough options appraisals, and throughout the process						
Accountable Director	**Initially identified key steps**	**Key Milestones/Progress June 2025-July 2026**	**Ongoing steps to embed**	**Revised dates (if applicable)**	**Overarching measure of success**	**Evidence**
JMc	• Undertake a detailed review of Cabinet decision making process, engage partners and Members in this review, and make any necessary changes to the Constitution and internal processes	• Key to organisational improvement is ensuring that the TVCA governance framework remains fit for purpose by reflecting current legislation, operational requirements, and best practice. • It is good practice to amend the Constitution with the aim to clarify decision making processes, strengthen accountability and transparency, and support effective collaboration between the mayor, Cabinet, and stakeholders in delivering strategic priorities for Tees Valley. • Completed review of the existing Local Assurance Framework.	• A phased approach to the implementation of the constitution and Governance review is in place with key milestones of April, June, July, September and November Cabinet meetings.		Clearly documented process from origin to decision. **<u>Impact</u>** • Improved quality and effectiveness of political engagement • Members are meaningfully involved from the outset • More informed, transparent and defensible	Cabinet decision process flow. Established calendar / schedule **<u>Potential impact indicators</u>** • Cabinet reports include clear, proportionate options appraisals • Evidence of Cabinet involvement at early stages – not just at final decision point • Reduction in deferred, withdrawn or revisited Cabinet decisions

		• Tees Valley-specific design principles, which align with the approved Tees Valley strategic fit, have been developed and endorsed. • There has been engagement with the Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government (MHCLG). • On 12 December 2025 Cabinet considered and approved the decision making principles. • May 2026 - Commencement of meetings for newly established Business Board which will help shape decisions • June 2026 - Work on the Governance Review continued, including delivery of the phased Constitution review including the development of updated decision-making arrangements.			decisions • Reduction in late challenge and delays • Stronger political ownership	• Feedback from Cabinet members in relation to clarity, usefulness and timeliness of information • Feedback from scrutiny, auditors or external reviewers in relation to the robustness of the Cabinet decision making process
Review the format and effectiveness of the existing Annual Governance Statement (AGS) in accordance with the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy (CIPFA) & the Society of Local Authority Chief Executives and Senior Managers (SOLACE) Good Governance Framework and make any necessary changes						
Accountable Director	**Initially identified key steps**	**Key Milestones/Progress June 2025-July 2026**	**Ongoing steps to embed**	**Revised dates (if applicable)**	**Overarching measure of success**	**Evidence**
JMc	• Review current format, engage partners and members as appropriate, taking into account best practice.	• The Annual Governance Statements (AGS) for TVCA, HDC, MDC and STDC for 2023/24 and 2024/25 have been reviewed and updated following feedback from the external auditor and will be reported with the final statement of accounts. • Updated draft templates are in place and are in line with CIPFA and SOLACE guidance. • A process is established which accords with the Best Value guidance. • April 2026 - All draft AGS complete • May 2026 - Code of Governance table incorporated into 2025/26 AGS • May 2026: Draft TVCA 2025/26 AGS presented to A&G Committee for comment. • June 2026 - Cabinet approved the draft TVCA 2025/26 AGS for publication, marking a significant step towards a refreshed approach to AGS, embedding a timely and well-managed annual governance reporting cycle.	This action has moved beyond the initial improvement phase and will now be managed within business-as-usual processes to ensure improvements are embedded, sustained and further developed. July 2026: TVCA 23/24 and 24/25 AGS to be presented to Cabinet on 17 July. The aim of this work is to continue to support improved assurance and clearer articulation of governance improvement actions.	Revised dates for the TVCA AGS 2023/24 and 2024/25 are to be confirmed, as they remain aligned with the publication and approval timetable for the corresponding accounts.	Production of annual governance statement which fairly reflects the position of governance across the authority with open and transparent acknowledgement where improvements need to be made, with appropriate actions to address. **<u>Impact</u>** • Improved clarity, quality and credibility of TVCA's self-assessment of governance, risk and control • Stronger senior and members ownership of governance issues, priorities and improvement actions • Strengthened internal and external assurance	Approved and updated AGS' through Audit & Governance / Cabinet. **<u>Potential impact indicators</u>** • Revised AGS format demonstrably aligns with CIPFA/SOLACE Good Governance Framework • AGS provides clear narrative of governance strengths, weaknesses, risks and improvement actions • Clear senior ownership of governance issues and agreed actions within the AGS • Positive feedback from A&G committee on usefulness of AGS • Increased confidence from auditors or external reviewers in relation to the quality of governance self-assessment
Ensure committee reports are of sufficient quality and draw attention to the pertinent information, considering best practice and feedback from Cabinet and local authority officers.						
Accountable Director	**Initially identified key steps**	**Key Milestones/Progress June 2025-July 2026**	**Ongoing steps to embed**	**Revised dates (if applicable)**	**Overarching measure of success**	**Evidence**
JMc	• Review structure and content of reports & deliver report writing training to identified staff. Deadline for reports clearly communicated with escalation process and action taken recorded.	• A full review of the reporting template and structure for Cabinet reports has been completed. • Report writing training has been delivered to some staff. • A new template and structure have now been rolled	•Ongoing- Report writing training to continue to be rolled out to TVCA staff on an ongoing basis. This will form part of implementation and training for new		Demonstrable audit trail of informed decision making. Testing of the process to ensure robustness.	This is in effect a blend of items in relation to governance activity. Process / step identification and reviews of TOR's within the wider

		out. • Linking to the strategic forward plan, clear Cabinet cycles and reporting deadlines are now defined.	committee services management system, following adoption. • Ongoing - The framework around report approval continues to be strengthened.		**Impact** • More effective and informed member decision making • Improved focus of committee discussions • Stronger challenge and reduction in need for clarification at meetings • Improved confidence in the robustness of decisions • More efficient meetings and better governance outcomes	governance framework will be supportive. **Potential impact indicators** • Committee reports consistently meet agreed quality standards • Improved feedback from Cabinet and committee members on clarity, relevance and usefulness of reports • Reduction in deferred decisions and/or requests for additional information • Increased confidence from members, senior officers and auditors in relation to the quality of information provided
Develop and implement an ongoing improvement plan with the Overview & Scrutiny (O&S) Committee to continue to make improvements to the effectiveness of the overview and scrutiny function, including a more strategic approach to work planning and improving the relationship with Cabinet and portfolio holders.						
Accountable Director	**Initially identified key steps**	**Key Milestones/Progress June 2025-July 2026**	**Ongoing steps to embed**	**Revised dates (if applicable)**	**Overarching measure of success**	**Evidence**
JMc	• Work with O&S Committee to develop improvement plan (merging any actions under the previous Centre for Governance & Scrutiny review where appropriate), with identified aims, objectives and timescales. • Ensure improvement activity is appropriately included in the Committee's work plan.	• First listening workshop held 14 May 2025 • Development of improvement continues with ownership of improvement by O&S committee. • Committee has adopted new work programmes and have developed, agreed and adopted improvement plan in support of the Organisation Improvement Plan. • Second workshop held 14 Feb 2026 - notes provide evidence of improvement • April 2026 Engagement with CfGS re O&S Committee improvements • July 2026: Functions and procedures of O&S committee included in member induction training	This action has moved beyond the initial improvement phase and will now be managed within business-as-usual processes to ensure improvements are embedded, sustained and further developed.		O&S Committee have shaped and developed the plan, the effectiveness of which can be demonstrated in its work and results. **Impact** • Strengthened effectiveness, independence and influence of the O&S committee • Scrutiny activity focused on areas of greatest impact/value/public interest • Earlier, constructive challenge is supported • Enhanced accountability, transparency and decision making	O&S papers, Oct 2025 onwards Approval of enhanced terms of reference, including the introduction of thematic leads aligned to portfolio areas. Adoption of formal improvement plan and revised approach to work programming. Approval of memorandum of understanding with the Audit & Governance Committee to strengthen role clarity, remit and coordination. Agreement of a 2-year work programme and update on the adoption of the Scrutiny Protocol, confirming over 80% of actions enacted and remaining actions on track. The evidence demonstrates sustained and structured progress in implementing the recommendation. Revised Terms of Reference approved in October 2025 strengthened the capacity of the Committee through the introduction of thematic leads operating in a shadow portfolio model. **Potential impact indicators**

Accountable Director	Initially identified key steps	Key Milestones/Progress June 2025-July 2026	Ongoing steps to embed	Revised dates (if applicable)	Overarching measure of success	Evidence
						• Clear forward work programme is in place for O&S Committee • Evidence that O&S recommendations add value and influence policy development or service improvement • Evidence of engagement between O&S, Cabinet and portfolio holders – including timely responses scrutiny recommendations • Increased confidence from members, officers and external reviewers in relation to effectiveness of O&S function

Ensure that all TVCA statutory committees are appropriately supported and challenged to maximise effectiveness.

Accountable Director	Initially identified key steps	Key Milestones/Progress June 2025-July 2026	Ongoing steps to embed	Revised dates (if applicable)	Overarching measure of success	Evidence
JMc	• Review governance officer capacity. • Action log developed and maintained and reported to each Committee meeting. • Review use of confidential items at statutory committees. •Implement staff training.	• Reviews have taken place of the statutory committees. • Action logs have been developed and are maintained. • There is an identified member of the TVCA Executive Leadership team who works alongside the Governance lead for each statutory committee as a Senior Responsible Officer.	This action has moved beyond the initial improvement phase and will now be managed within business-as-usual processes to ensure improvements are embedded, sustained and further developed. This will also be considered in line with requirements relating to Devolution to ensure that capacity and capability to support any new requirements is considered.		Review of effectiveness of each Committee. **Impact** • Improved effectiveness, independence and contribution to governance and decision making • Strengthened oversight, assurance and accountability • Improved focus on core statutory responsibilities and areas of highest risk/impact	**Potential impact indicators** • Statutory committees receive high-quality officer support, clear reports, advice and follow-up • Evidence of informed, proportionate and constructive challenge by members • Committee agendas and discussions are demonstrably aligned to statutory responsibilities, priorities and key risks • Increased confidence from committee chairs, members, officers and auditors in the effectiveness of statutory committees

Review Cabinet portfolios and strengthen the role of portfolio holders, ensuring TVCA priorities reflect and deliver on local priorities where this is appropriate and can add value, including appropriate support from senior TVCA officers, and capture changes within the Constitution.

Accountable Director	Initially identified key steps	Key Milestones/Progress June 2025-July 2026	Ongoing steps to embed	Revised dates (if applicable)	Overarching measure of success	Evidence
TB	• Working with the LAs and Cabinet, agree how portfolio holders are identified and agreed, and how portfolio holders input into TVCA governance processes. Make any	• The role of portfolio holders has been strengthened with the intention that each portfolio holder leads their area of responsibility, with support from senior officers. • Additional responsibilities have been included	This action has moved beyond the initial improvement phase and will now be managed within business-as-usual processes with annual review points aligned to the Annual General Meeting to		Feedback from Cabinet members of shared ownership and contribution. Identifiable output in	• Defined portfolios within the constitution. • Agreed remits / responsibilities that align with authority priorities.

	necessary changes to the TVCA Constitution and internal processes.	within the portfolios, for example finance and inward investment, which marks a step forward in terms of transparency and ownership. • There is also a need to ensure that Cabinet as a whole develops a deeper understanding of each portfolio. • The empowerment of portfolio holders has meant that they have led on the development of strategic priorities, for example through workshop sessions and engagement with staff across TVCA and the constituent local authorities. • Strengthening the role of portfolio holders has also been a major part of the development of TVCA's new External Communications Plan. • June 2026 - The Mayor and TVCA officers worked with Cabinet members to refine portfolios ahead of the Annual General Meeting. Revised portfolios were approved to strengthen alignment with TVCA's strategic priorities. Full details of the revised portfolios are available on the TVCA Cabinet webpage -TVCA Cabinet - About	ensure improvements are embedded, sustained and further developed.		decision making and wider governance, which acknowledges the role and remit of portfolio holders. **Impact** • Improved political leadership, accountability and clarity of ownership for TVCA priorities • Better alignment between TVCA and local priorities – more join-up within policy development and delivery • Improved political engagement and decision making • Improved clarity of roles and responsibilities	**Potential impact indicators** • Clearly defined cabinet portfolios are reflected accurately in the Constitution • Demonstrable leadership and engagement from portfolio holders in relation to TVCA priorities • Appropriate senior officer support is in place • Increased confidence from members, officers and external reviewers in relation to effectiveness and clarity of portfolio arrangements.

Implement regular informal Cabinet meetings, both with and without officers present, Cabinet workshop sessions where appropriate and portfolio meetings with senior TVCA officers and senior local authority officers where appropriate.

Accountable Director	Initially identified key steps	Key Milestones/Progress June 2025-July 2026	Ongoing steps to embed	Revised dates (if applicable)	Overarching measure of success	Evidence
	• Implement a cycle of Informal cabinet meetings, workshop sessions and portfolio meetings in the corporate calendar, which have an identified and timely link to the governance processes.	• The organisation has strengthened its governance framework through the enhancement of informal governance arrangements with Cabinet. • Introduction of informal Cabinet meetings with a purpose to discuss the forward plans, key decisions and review of draft Cabinet reports. • A series of dedicated Cabinet workshops to provide a valuable opportunity for Cabinet members to engage in open and constructive dialogue around the Authority's strategic direction, priorities, and the alignment of these within the budget-setting process. • The enhanced governance arrangements mark a significant step in fostering collective ownership of TVCA's vision and ensuring that future decisions are grounded in shared understanding and ambition. • Standing meetings have been established with Portfolio leads and TVCA Directors/Officers. • The pre-cabinet cycle includes meetings with the Tees Valley Chief Executives group and Tees Valley Management Group, in addition to meetings with Local Authority Monitoring Officers and Finance Directors. • A twelve-month Cabinet forward plan for 2026/27 has been developed collaboratively with Cabinet	This action has moved beyond the initial improvement phase and will now be managed within business-as-usual processes to ensure improvements are embedded, sustained and further developed.		Production of corporate calendar, which is agreed and owned by TVCA, partners and Members. Evidence of additional engagement with Cabinet members, with all feedback addressed and reported back to Cabinet members. **Impact** • Strengthened collective political leadership • Space created for open discussion, early engagement and shared understanding • Improved quality of formal reports and decisions – reduction in late challenge and delays • More effective, transparent and timeline outcomes	• Schedule of meetings / informal meeting minutes. • Circulation of emails / minutes. **Potential impact indicators** • Regular informal Cabinet meetings/workshops/portfolio meetings are held and well-attended • Evidence that key issues and proposals are discussed at an early stage prior to formal Cabinet decision making • Fewer deferrals or requests for further information • Positive feedback from Cabinet members in relation to the value of informal engagement in supporting their role

		• This includes a programme of informal engagement that is now in place. • Ensuring that Cabinet is involved in the development of strategic priorities and has a sound understanding of the issues in advance of the formal Cabinet meetings. • April 2026: Drafted template for informal Cabinet workshops and meetings shared with Directors ahead of sharing with Cabinet • May 2026: Corporate calendar/forward plan which includes informal Cabinet meetings is in place for July 2026-June 2027 • May 2026: Internal road map for internal engagement continued - development linked to key strategic priorities and the formal Cabinet forward plan to ensure timely Cabinet member engagement. • July 2026: Committee meeting dates published on website				
Implement a new Member induction process and ongoing programme of development, learning from best practice, for members of all TVCA statutory committees to ensure that they are familiar with TVCA, their roles & responsibilities and the expectations of their position.						
Accountable Director	**Initially identified key steps**	**Key Milestones/Progress June 2025-July 2026**	**Ongoing steps for implementation**	**Revised dates (if applicable)**	**Overarching measure of success**	**Evidence**
JMc	• Request feedback from Members and stakeholders on the current induction process. Develop Member induction process for Cabinet and all Statutory Committees.	• A collaborative approach is being developed to discuss roles and responsibilities. • May 2026 - Member induction process has been reviewed from a statutory perspective and in consultation with LAs. • May 2026 - Training matrix has been developed as part of the new member induction process • June 2026 - A training schedule and roll-out plan are in place for member induction. • July 2026 - Training for new and existing Members delivered by internal TVCA staff and external providers	This action has moved beyond the initial improvement phase and will now be managed within business-as-usual processes to ensure improvements are embedded, sustained and further developed.		All new committee members complete the induction within an agreed timeframe following appointment. An ongoing programme is implemented. **Impact** • Improved Member understanding of TVCA, their roles and responsibilities and expectations of membership • More effective participation in statutory committees • Improved quality of challenge, scrutiny and decision making • Shared baseline of knowledge – reduces reliance on informal briefings and individual experience • Increased confidence in the capability and effectiveness of members serving on statutory committees	Member / Officer statutory training matrix to address legislative / constitutional requirements. **Potential impact indicators** • High completion rates for member induction • Evidence of ongoing development by Members • Feedback from members in relation to improved understanding of roles, responsibilities and expectations • Evidence of improved quality of debate, challenge and decision making in statutory committee meetings
Actions complete – ongoing steps to embed.						
Review the operation of all TVCA statutory committees, ensuring appropriate officer support, and implement any necessary changes to ensure that the responsibilities of each are addressed effectively and efficiently with robust work plans.						

Accountable Director	Initially identified key steps	Key Milestones/Progress June 2025-July 2026	Ongoing steps for implementation	Revised dates (if applicable)	Overarching measure of success	Evidence
JMc	• Review legislative requirements and terms of reference for each Statutory Committee, engage partners and Committee members in the review, and update the constitution accordingly.	• Roles and responsibilities of key groups within the Cabinet cycle have been considered and articulated as part of the Cabinet decision making process, which were considered and approved by Cabinet on 12 December. • This is to provide further alignment with organisation objectives and fit with best practice approaches and governance opportunities. • Both Regulatory Committees have adopted new ways of working. Are adopting new work programmes and have developed improvement plans in support of the Organisation Improvement Plan. •Senior Responsible Officer lead from Executive Leadership team allocated to all statutory and non-statutory committees •Review undertaken of existing groups ongoing next steps in relation to updated committees following English Devolution Empowerment Act 2026 • June 2026 - Further review of statutory committees underway to ensure alignment with requirements of SAF and updated Constitution	•July 2026 - September – Follow up review to be complete following adoption of SAF review, and the English Devolution Empowerment Act 2026 and aligned to the constitution review.	SAF adoption is now expected to be September 2026 but this is subject to MHCLG comments and approval	Revised Terms of References produced. Evidence of training and feedback from Committee members. Changes reflected in governance processes and Constitution. **Impact** • Committees clear on purpose, responsibilities and contributions • Improved quality, timeliness and effectiveness of committee business and advice to members • Ability for committees to use time effectively and dedicate pro-active focus to areas of greatest priority • More effective scrutiny and decision making	• Streamlined consistent TORs for Committees. • Standardised TORs for advisory groups [templates] **Potential impact indicators** • Committees have clearly defined roles, responsibilities and terms of reference • Officer support is in place with effective agenda planning, reporting and follow-up • Forward work plans in place • Feedback from members, auditors and external reviewers in relation to improved confidence in the impact of committees
Ensure that TVCA continues to embed the organisational response to all recommendations from the independent Tees Valley review and reports produced by the Centre for Governance and Scrutiny (CfGS) and the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy (CIPFA).						
Accountable Director	**Initially identified key steps**	**Key Milestones/Progress June 2025- July 2026**	**Ongoing steps for implementation**	**Revised dates (if applicable)**	**Overarching measure of success**	**Evidence**
	• Establish baseline and progress against recommendations and develop action plan to address outstanding actions. Develop and implement continuous improvement actions.	•TVCA remains conscious of previous recommendations from the Tees Valley Review and those from reports produced by the Centre for Governance and Scrutiny and the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountability. These recommendations have been incorporated into the Organisational Improvement Plan and effective implementation is closely monitored.	Ongoing- Continue to demonstrate progress and embed actions.		Demonstrable progress towards embedded actions. **Impact** • Reinforcement of commitment to learning improvement and good governance • Strengthened governance, transparency and accountability • Reduced risk of recurring issues and/or external challenge • More resilient systems, behaviours and decision making	Secondary reviews by CFGS / CIPFA to provide concluding remarks against recommendations. **Potential impact indicators** • Regular reporting to Cabinet and relevant committees on progress, impact and any residual gaps

Actions in progress – nearing completion						
Review all governance processes and procedures and implement any necessary changes to ensure exemplar governance and decision-making best practice, capture changes within the Constitution and improve awareness and understanding across the organisation.						
Accountable Director	**Initially identified key steps**	**Key Milestones/Progress June 2025-July 2026**	**Next steps and dates**	**Revised dates (if applicable)**	**Overarching measure of success**	**Evidence**
JMc	• Undertake internal review of processes, sub-divide to directorate/teams, identify changes to be made. • Identify stakeholders and consultees and decision making needed i.e. from Cabinet. • Incorporate review by formalising each process into TVCA governance structure.	• Initial review of governance processes and procedures undertaken. • Following this review, items that required immediate attention were prioritised. • At its meeting on 12 December, Cabinet considered governance items as detailed below: • Approved the development of a Single Assurance Framework which will replace the existing Local Assurance Framework. • Approved the establishment of an Independent Remuneration Panel • Approved in principle the Public Code of Conduct • Approved Decision making Principles • Specific details are noted throughout this document. • Immediate priority items will result in updates to the Constitution when required. • A full Constitution review is underway – as detailed above. • At its meeting on 20 February 2026, Audit & Governance Committee reviewed, made no amendments, and supported the recommendation to Cabinet to approve the Public Code of Conduct. • Audit & Governance Committee to consider SAF design principles on 20 February 2026. • April 2026: Review of process and documentation relating to Mayoral Decision Notices, including benchmarking with other CAs. • April 2026: Benchmarking of MCA schemes of delegation carried out • Setting up of investment committee and membership of Business Board agreed at Cabinet meeting of 24 April 2026 • May 2026: Updated whistleblowing policy presented to A&G Committee (in-quorate meeting) and given informal approval. Approach to review of whistleblowing linked to internal auditor recommendations. • May 2026: Communications plan developed to improve organisational awareness and understanding of whistleblowing in response to staff survey results.	• A phased approach to the implementation of the Constitution and governance review is in place with key milestones of April, June, July, September and November Cabinet meetings. • 30 July 2026 - Internal process review to be complete Ongoing - Internal governance group to drive development of content is progressing this work and ensuring alignment across the organisation and other actions. Linked to the organisational operating model.		Clear, demonstrable and effective governance processes demonstrated through positive feedback from Members, partners and stakeholders and understanding of key processes by TVCA staff. **Impact** • Improved quality, consistency and transparency of decision making • Improved clarification of roles, responsibilities and decision routes will reduce governance risk • Better compliance, more timely decisions and stronger accountability	Evidence will be more generally holistic in approach. As it will encompass several areas of review. **Potential impact indicators** • Updated governance processes and procedures are documented, approved and operational • Changes to governance arrangements are reflected in the Constitution and Scheme of Delegation • Fewer delays, challenges or escalations from unclear governance arrangements • Feedback from auditors, officers and members in relation to understanding (and reduction in errors/escalations) • Feedback from members, auditors and external reviewers in relation to confidence in governance arrangements

		• June 2026 - Revised whistleblowing policy approved by Cabinet • June 2026 - Review of Mayoral Decision Notices is complete. Any changes to process will be formalised following adoption of revised Constitution. Any mayoral decisions within this period will continue to go to Cabinet. • June 2026 - Internal working group continue to prioritise, track progress and document governance processes and procedures • July 2026 - TVCA Constitutional piece on Member/Officer relations protocol recommended to other authorities by external governance trainer. • July 2026 – Further reviewed and revised information Governance policies presented to Cabinet and approved by Cabinet – as detailed in publication scheme action below. • July 2026 – Further reviewed and revised Governance policies presented to Cabinet and approved by Cabinet, including: • Anti-Fraud, Bribery and Corruption Policy; • Anti-Money Laundering Policy; • RIPA Surveillance Protocol.				
Review the non-statutory officer advisory group governance structure, in collaboration with the constituent local authorities and other key stakeholders and implement any necessary changes to ensure efficiency and effectiveness.						
Accountable Director	**Initially identified key steps**	**Key Milestones/Progress June 2025-July 2026**	**Next steps and dates**	**Revised dates (if applicable)**	**Overarching measure of success**	**Evidence**
JMc	• Review what exists, what they do and how they contribute to overall governance across the authority, engaging with key partners and stakeholders in the review.	•Scoping is including examination of best practice advisory board/ committee structures within CAs as well as the specific functions, membership, opportunity and organisational alignment required within the TVCA governance framework. •Senior Responsible Officer lead from Executive Leadership team allocated to all statutory and non-statutory committees • Review undertaken • May 2026 - Engagement sessions continued which included focus on informal governance arrangements i.e. non-statutory committees/advisory groups • June-July 2026 - TVCA Directors reviewing officer arrangements in line with revised portfolio areas and the wider Governance review.	•July- September 2026 – Follow up review to be complete following adoption of SAF and the English Devolution Empowerment Act 2026, aligned with the constitution review.	SAF adoption is now expected to be September 2026 but this is subject to MHCLG comments and approval	Coherent committee and non-statutory advisory group structure that supports the authority and work of Cabinet. Demonstrated in Committee effectiveness reviews. **Impact** • Groups clear on purpose, accountability and value • Groups operate efficiently and support formal decision making and assurance arrangements • Strengthened shared ownership and consistency in advisory structures • Improved quality and timeliness of advice provided to senior officers and members • Better strategic coordination	From the details of the above area, we need to understand the terms of reference to better decide where they exist. This part will be reviewed inside of the SAF implementation work / delivery of portfolio changes. **Potential impact indicators** • Groups have clearly defined roles remits and reporting lines • Reduction in duplication of meetings, groups or agendas • Feedback from senior leaders or members on improved quality of advice received from groups • Evidence of effective engagement with constituent local authorities

Undertake a comprehensive review of the TVCA Constitution, including Scheme of Delegation, working closely with the constituent local authorities and Cabinet, to ensure it is fit for purpose.						
Accountable Director	**Initially identified key steps**	**Key Milestones/Progress June 2025-July 2026**	**Next steps and dates**	**Revised dates (if applicable)**	**Overarching measure of success**	**Evidence**
JMc	Complete internal review of the Constitution, engage members and partners in the review and formalise revised version at a future Cabinet meeting.	•Delivering a new and enhanced Constitution is central to the long-term improvement aspirations of TVCA. •An internal review of the Constitution has taken place. •Various sections of the Constitution have been considered and prioritised. •On 12 December 2025 a report presented to Cabinet outlined immediate organisational improvement requirement that requires clarity on: Decision making principles and how they should be applied The definition of a key-decision The scrutiny call-in process Officer delegations Contract Procedure Rules Managing unreasonable public behaviour with regard to Freedom of Information requests and complaints. •The immediate focus of constitutional update is on decision making, specifically in ensuring that clarity exists in regard to how decisions should be taken and held to account. •Proposed some immediate enhancements to the existing Constitution to address identified priority areas relating to the Organisational Improvement Plan. •A structure for a revised Constitution developed and shared with Cabinet on 12 December 2025. •On 12 December Cabinet considered and approved the decision making principles. •On 12 December Cabinet approved in principle the Public Code of Conduct – subject to review by the Audit and Governance Committee • Audit & Governance Committee reviewed the proposed Constitutional amendments at its meeting on 20 February • March 2026 – onwards - A programme of work is in place, led by Jodie Townsend, to support the development and implementation of a revised TVCA constitution. In March this included 1-to-1 sessions held with Cabinet members. • May 2026 - Jodie Townsend continued to progress this work in relation to the wider Governance review. • May 2026 - Individual engagement sessions with Cabinet members re ongoing review of TVCA governance which included Constitution review/redraft. • May 2026 - Internal policy and process review continuing which aligns to updated constitution.	• A phased approach to the implementation of the Constitution and governance review is in place with key milestones of April, June, July, September and November Cabinet meetings.		Revised Constitution is agreed at TVCA Cabinet. TVCA has clear, demonstrable and effective governance processes **Impact** • Clearer, more robust governance framework ensuring decision making arrangements are transparent, lawful and fit-for-purpose • Strengthened shared ownership, consistency and confidence in governance arrangements • Improved accountability • More efficient decision making	Reviewed constitutions. **Potential impact indicators** • Revised Constitution and Scheme of Delegation are formally approved • Fewer delays, challenges or escalations from unclear governance arrangements • Feedback from members and senior officials in relation to improved understanding • Feedback from members, auditors and external reviewers in relation to confidence in the governance framework

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		• June 2026 - Work to revise the Constitution continues to advance through the Constitution Working Group, following an agreed phased approach.				
Undertake a comprehensive review of the Code of Conduct for Officers and Members and implement any necessary changes to ensure it is fit for purpose and aligns with best practice.						
Accountable Director	**Initially identified key steps**	**Key Milestones/Progress June 2025-July 2026**	**Next steps and dates**	**Revised dates (if applicable)**	**Overarching measure of success**	**Evidence**
JMc	• Review current Code of Conduct, secure Cabinet sign off and implement changes.	•Scoping has taken place •Review will include assessment of language, clarity and accessibility; ethical standards; compliance; supporting protocols and process; required training and awareness; links to reporting and whistleblowing; examination of enforcement and available sanctions; clarity on process and opportunities for use of Independent Persons. • April 2026 - Review of code of conduct and best practice carried out • April/May 2026 - Recruitment of 3 independent persons underway • May 2026 - Code of Conduct benchmarking analysis carried out against other Combined Authorities • May 2026 - Updated form for complaints on website • May 2026 - Applications closed for recruitment independent persons. • June 2026 - Appointment of independent persons ratified by Cabinet. • July 2026 – Members provided with training on code of conduct as part of Member induction process – covering both the current code and the model code which is expected to be adopted from September	• June 2026: Refreshed Code of Conduct to go to A&G Committee • September 2026: Refreshed Code of Conduct to go to Cabinet as a stand-alone item • September 2026: Publish refreshed Code of Conduct on website The refreshed Code of Conduct will now be presented to Cabinet in September 2026 to allow for input from the newly appointed Independent Persons.	September 2026	Revised Code of Conduct that aligns to best practice approved by Cabinet and included in member induction processes. **Impact** • Strengthened ethical standards, behaviours and accountability • Improved clarity on expected behaviours, roles and responsibilities – reducing risk of misconduct or misunderstanding • Earlier resolution of issues • Reinforcement of positive, organisational culture • Enhanced confidence in governance arrangements and decision making	Revised code embedded into the constitution. Return forms from members with signed Code of Conduct. **Potential impact indicators** • Revised Code of Conduct formally approved • Feedback from officers and members in relation to improved understanding or expected standards and how to raise concerns • Evidence of positive behavioural standards being reinforced through leadership, training and practice • Feedback from scrutiny, auditors or external reviewers in relation to the robustness of the Cabinet decision making process.
Review the TVCA Publication Scheme and make any necessary changes, to make the maximum amount of information readily available to the public.						
Accountable Director	**Initially identified key steps**	**Key Milestones/Progress June 2025-July 2026**	**Next steps and dates**	**Revised dates (if applicable)**	**Overarching measure of success**	**Evidence**
JMc	• Assess what is currently published against what we are able to share publicly.	•Publication Scheme is linked to a wider review of polices linked to data and data protection, this work is in progress • March 2026 - Interim Information Governance Manager commenced role •April 2026 – Review of information governance policies completed by interim Head of Governance • May 2026 - Recommendations from data protection/IT audit have been actioned and are scheduled for sign off in July/August • June 2026 - The Publication Scheme review is complete and the ICO model has been adopted. A gap	•May 2026 - Onwards - Prioritisation and implementation of refreshed polices following review, linked to wider review of Governance processes.		Revised publication scheme linked to legislative requirements, which is regularly updated and enhanced, with scheduled reviews. **Impact** • Information more easily and proactively available to the public • Improved transparency and openness • Reduction in need for reactive disclosures and FoI requests	Clear publication scheme that is public facing and plain English. **Potential impact indicators** • Revised Publication Scheme is approved and published • Increased volume and breadth of information proactively published • Reduction in routine FoI requests • Reduction in repeat enquiries for information already held by TVCA • Feedback from public indicates

		analysis is underway to assess compliance and identify any further publication requirements. • June 2026 - Revised Information Governance [Data Protection] policies presented to A&G. • July 2026 – Further reviewed and revised information Governance policies presented to Cabinet and approved by Cabinet, including: • Data Protection Policy • Data Retention and Deletion Policy • Access to Information (FOI/EIR) Policy • Subject Access Request Policy • Staff Privacy Notice • CCTV Policy			• Improved levels of public trust and confidence	improved confidence in TVCA's approach to transparency
Implement a new governance e-agenda and forward planning system to improve efficiency and compliance.						
Accountable Director	**Initially identified key steps**	**Key Milestones/Progress June 2025-July 2026**	**Next steps and dates**	**Revised dates (if applicable)**	**Overarching measure of success**	**Evidence**
JMc	• Implement an E-agenda system, & roll out training to staff, partners and members.	• Work is continuing in terms of scoping and finding an appropriate platform for Governance e-agenda and forward planning system. • Scoping into a Governance e-agenda and forward planning system is continuing. • Conversations ongoing with platform provider for Modern.gov and exploration is continuing with alternative platform providers. Publish forward plan and agendas on the website. • Procurement process for appropriate systems has commenced. Suppliers have responded and submissions are being reviewed. •March 2026 – July 2026 - Process reviews undertaken and addressed. System will be the outcome and support mechanism to embed the identified improvements.	This work is interlinked with the review of Governance processes and procedures. • July 2026 – August 2026 – finalise procurement of system • August 2026 – September 2026 - internal training and roll-out with a view to being implemented for September Cabinet Cycle.		Modern.gov works for staff and members with feedback regularly sought and actions taken to address issue. **Impact** • Improved efficiency, accuracy and timeliness of committee administration and decision making • Strengthened compliance with legislative, constitutional and procedural requirements – reducing governance and legal risks • Workloads managed more effectively • Improved coordination across committees	Delivered e-agenda system. **Potential impact indicators** • Reduced time spent on management of agendas, reports and minutes • Clear, up-to-date forward plans are available • Improved feedback on robustness of committee administration and record keeping
Actions in Progress						
Produce a readiness plan for fiscal devolution, including a potential future integrated settlement, and new accountability arrangements as set out in the Devolution White Paper. Undertake a business planning exercise and produce a readiness plan in anticipation of the expanded powers set out in the Devolution White Paper. [These two actions have been merged – and the top action has been moved from Use of Resources to Governance]						
Accountable Director	**Initially identified key steps**	**Key Milestones/Progress June 2025-July 2026**	**Next steps and dates**	**Revised dates (if applicable)**	**Overarching measure of success**	**Evidence**
TB/SB	• Produce baseline self-assessment of readiness against best practice using models produced for MCAs who have already progressed through readiness	• There is a clear need to ensure readiness for the new responsibilities and powers in the English Devolution and Community Empowerment act 2026. • TVCA is considering future organisational structure,	•March 2026 - A clear timetable to be produced and considered by ELT, linked to timetables for the most immediate		Planning exercise. Agree readiness plan.	Evidence to be established as the activity on this task continues.

	activity. • Produce an action plan designed to address any gaps in readiness identified through the baseline assessment work to deliver for March 2026 to inform formal readiness processes with Government. • This is on the basis that the first financial year where further fiscal devolution and integrated settlement could occur for TVCA is 1 April 2027. • Approval of readiness plan with stakeholders	capacity and resource requirements, which is interrelated with the workforce development strategy. • Consideration is being given to how it can ensure the activities that the organisation is delivering now are effectively captured and aligned to anticipated future activities, ensuring that the organisation is meeting its statutory, legal and contractual functions. • Planning has been undertaken to fully understand the powers and responsibilities in the Devolution Act and there has been engagement with MHCLG. • Consideration has been given to the resource implications, and this is being considered as part of the workforce development strategy workstream. • The development of the SAF, which will progress to an Accountability Framework, which is a requirement for potential future fiscal devolution. • ELT have produced a matrix of existing programmes and operational priorities to support the development of this work, including the Spatial Development Strategy and the Local Growth Plan. • May 2026: Internal work in relation to the English Devolution Act continued as further clarification received.	implications of the English Devolution and Community Empowerment act 2026. •This is also aligned to the Constitution Review, Governance Review, Single Assurance Framework Review and Workforce Development plan. • June 2026 – onwards: Continue with planning exercise to align with the readiness plan for the English Devolution and Community Empowerment Act. •Readiness plan for Fiscal Devolution will be prepared at a later date, with timescales that are to be agreed - The organisation will produce a baseline self-assessment of readiness against best practice using models produced for MCAs who have already progressed through readiness activity for fiscal devolution.		Readiness plan is in place with clear target dates and responsibilities. TVCA Cabinet approved readiness plan. **Impact** • TVCA is strategically, financially and institutionally prepared for expanded powers and responsibilities • Improved understanding of future opportunities, risks and capacity requirements • Strengthened assurance for members, constituent LAs and government • Reduction in delivery risks • Successful transition to expanded devolved powers	**Potential impact indicators** • Readiness plan is approved and sets out actions, milestones and dependencies • Proposals for future accountability, governance and assurance arrangements are defined and agreed • Financial, workforce and systems requirements are identified • Evidence of engagement and shared understanding with Cabinet and constituent LAs on implications
Culture						
Actions complete						
Initiate and undertake a programme of Organisational Development (OD), with an external partner to provide support and challenge.						
Accountable Director	**Initially identified key steps**	**Key Milestones/Progress June 2025 - July 2026**	**Ongoing steps to embed**	**Revised dates (if applicable)**	**Overarching measure of success**	**Evidence**
SB/CW	• Procure O&D partner to support the OD development • Develop the programme of OD for consideration and agreement by TVCA Senior Leadership Team.	•OD Partner Procured - April 2025 •A series of workshops have been held with the Senior Leadership team - May 2025 - December 2025 •TVCA is working in partnership with the Local Government Association (LGA) to complement the OD partner work - December 2025 •TVCA are accessing training and guidance on organisational development via the LGA - December 2025 •Directors undertook 90 day plan exercises with the CEO - Concluded December 2025 •The 6m appraisal cycle was commenced with clear direction to Head of Service to cascade to their managers that appraisal objectives should relate to Directors 90 day plans. •April 2026 - Change management processes commenced • Initial analysis of TVCA's OD Plan has been carried out • May 2026: new TVCA Staff Charter has been drafted. • July 2026: Organisational People Plan (incorporating OD roadmap) in development	• July 2026-onwards: Implementation and embedding of the Staff Charter to continue. •April-September 2026: initiatives continue to be undertaken and implemented This action has moved beyond the initial improvement phase and will now be managed through the Continuous Improvement Plan to ensure improvements are embedded, sustained and further developed.		OD Programme is developed and agreed with clear steps for implementation over the short, medium and long term. **Impact** • Development of a more resilient, open and high-performing organisational culture • Engagement with external partner provides independent support and constructive challenge – helps to surface underlying issues, test assumptions and accelerate change • Strengthened leadership behaviours, ways of working and relationships	**Potential impact indicators** • OD programme is in place with defined objectives and milestones • Evidence of improvements in leadership behaviours, openness and collaboration • Improved feedback from staff in relation to trust, communication and culture
Develop and implement a professional development plan for the Chief Executive (CEX) and all Directors to ensure continued development and establish a high performing senior leadership team.						

Accountable Director	Initially identified key steps	Key Milestones/Progress June 2025 – July 2026	Ongoing steps to embed	Revised dates (if applicable)	Overarching measure of success	Evidence
SB/CW	• Develop Organisational Development (OD) road map, which details a 12-month rolling programme of OD workshops, mentoring, coaching, and supplementary interventions.	•Feb 2026 - Workforce development roadmap designed and agreed with TVCA and the LGA. • April 2026: Implementation of initiatives identified in roadmap is underway e.g. mentoring, coaching, workshops, leadership days	This action has moved beyond the initial improvement phase and will now be managed within business-as-usual processes to ensure improvements are embedded, sustained and further developed.		Personal Development Plans in place for the CEX and Directors. **<u>Impact</u>** • Strong, visible and effective leadership • Strengthened collective leadership behaviours, decision making and accountability • Reinforcement of positive organisational culture, resilience and readiness to manage change • Improved organisational performance, confidence and stability	**<u>Potential impact indicators</u>** • PD plans in place for CEX and Directors • Evidence of active maintenance and review of PD plans • Demonstrable leadership behaviours modelling openness, accountability and continuous improvement • Improved confidence in capabilities of senior leadership team
Implement an internal communications plan to improve employee engagement and voice, through ongoing engagement and learning activity and to embed the actions within the Organisational Improvement Plan across the organisation.						
Accountable Director	**Initially identified key steps**	**Key Milestones/Progress June 2025 - July 2026**	**Ongoing steps to embed**	**Revised dates (if applicable)**	**Overarching measure of success**	**Evidence**
CP	Develop and embed an internal communications plan, which is shared with all staff. Continually monitor plan to ensure effectiveness.	Improved internal engagement through introduction of: • All staff briefings – from April 2025 – ongoing • Staff forum – from March 2025 – ongoing • Lunch and Learn session from March 2025 – ongoing. • Regular video updates from the Chief Executive – April 2025 - ongoing • Updates from Director of Operations – June 2025 • Reception display board notifications – July 2025 • Engaged with the staff forum on internal communications plan – September 2025 • Engaged with staff forum on improvements to intranet - June 2025 • The 2025 staff survey had a cross section of staff attending staff focus group sessions to understand the four weakest scoring areas. • Actions were created and have been delivered. This includes work with the communications team on an internal communication strategy. • April 2026 - format of staff forum adjusted to allow focus on high-impact areas. Rolling Q&A document also in place and updated monthly for review by all staff. • May 2026 - all-staff meeting to facilitate input into Local Growth Plan prior to publication	This action has moved beyond the initial improvement phase and will now be managed within business-as-usual processes to ensure improvements are embedded, sustained and further developed.		Communications plan is agreed and staff are reporting positive feedback (through regular feedback requests) on communication and visibility. **<u>Impact</u>** • Strengthened employee engagement • Improved staff understanding of organisational priorities and their role in delivery of the Organisational Improvement plan • Better ownership of change • Improved morale, alignment and delivery	**<u>Potential impact indicators</u>** • Improved staff feedback on opportunities to be informed and engaged • Regular, clear and accessible communications are in place • Evidence of two-way engagement • Evidence that improvement actions are reflected in everyday practice

		• June 2026 - The staff survey concluded, and results were shared with all staff at the June briefing to support openness and transparency				
Improve relationships between senior management and all staff through improved communication, visibility, engagement activity, openness to receiving feedback/challenge and demonstrating that the organisation is responsive to staff.						
Accountable Director	**Initially identified key steps**	**Key Milestones/Progress June 2025-July 2026**	**Ongoing steps to embed**	**Revised dates (if applicable)**	**Overarching measure of success**	**Evidence**
SB/CW	Regular staff updates via TVCA intranet - request feedback from staff - ongoing staff surveys - Discussion at all staff meetings on progress of embedding change.	• September 2025 - Staff focus group sessions identified the need for continued transparent communications, with a marked improvement noted. • November 2025 - A staff forum request was delivered for more visible and accessible executive level leadership comms, including written recap of CEX update. • Staff want better cross-team understanding and this will be achieved through lunch and learns, intranet development on what teams do. • Comms team is now working to improve internal knowledge on organisational>Directorate> team objectives and deliverables. • The Implementation of the communication methods detailed above aim to support relationship building. • Organisational Priorities meetings between Directors and Heads of Service implemented • You said/We Did staff forum feedback from People Team update during February 2026 All Staff Briefing •April 2026 – Induction sessions with CEX for new starters commenced. • April 2026 – review of exit interview process for staff leavers undertaken and changes implemented •May 2026 – annual staff survey issued to all staff.	This action has moved beyond the initial improvement phase and will now be managed within business-as-usual processes to ensure improvements are embedded, sustained and further developed.		Evidence shared on TVCA intranet - staff confirm they are informed through regular feedback requests. **Impact** • Strengthened trust, engagement and morale amongst staff • Improved mutual understanding and reduction in perceived distance between leadership and the wider workforce • More positive organisational culture • Stronger collaboration, retention and organisational performance	**Potential impact indicators** • Increased visibility of senior staff through regular engagement activity, briefings and presence • Improved staff feedback on opportunities to raise views, challenge constructively and influence change • Evidence that staff feedback is acted upon • Feedback from staff in relation to perception of trust, openness and approachability of leadership
Ensure that the TVCA values (open, empathetic, collaborative & focussed) are embedded through everyday activity, organisational development and the appraisal process.						
Accountable Director	**Initially identified key steps**	**Key Milestones/Progress June 2025-July 2026**	**Ongoing steps to embed**	**Revised dates (if applicable)**	**Overarching measure of success**	**Evidence**
SB/CW	•Design and implement a recordable system to give positive feedback where TVCA's values are lived out and demonstrated	•Intranet shoutout feature has now been updated to link achievement to the values demonstrated by colleagues •TVCA values are embedded in job adverts by way of candidates needing to align their profile to the values. •In selection processes, interviews now have a set matrix and managers are provided with a bank of questions to assess technical skills, role competencies and TVCA value alignment. •A new induction video has been created that focuses on TVCA's values as the theme Office graphics/wall decals are installed displaying our values also the reception TV screen and intranet. •May 2026 - latest staff survey is structured around the four core TVCA values	This action has moved beyond the initial improvement phase and will now be managed within business-as-usual processes to ensure improvements are embedded, sustained and further developed.		Clear data showing increasing evidence of TVCA staff living our values. **Impact** • Strengthened shared culture and ways of working • Improved trust, accountability and consistency • Improved engagement and performance	**Potential impact indicators** • Evidence that values are reflected in everyday behaviours • Consistent demonstration from leaders of TVCA values in their leadership approach • Appraisal process explicitly references and assesses how individuals demonstrate TVCA values

		• June 2026 - Staff survey results identified 'this is an open and honest organisation' as the area showing the greatest improvement since the 2025 survey.				• Improved staff perceptions of openness, empathy, collaboration and focus

Create a healthier work environment by engaging with staff through the staff survey and staff forum and making changes/delivering activities that will influence staff satisfaction in terms of wellbeing and engagement.

Accountable Director	Initially identified key steps	Key Milestones/Progress June 2025-July 2026	Ongoing steps to embed	Revised dates (if applicable)	Overarching measure of success	Evidence
	•Establish Staff Forum •Staff surveys acted upon •Create 12-month calendar of Lunchtime Learns •Provide multi-purpose space for staff	•Staff Forum up and running, improvement an ongoing agenda item •Focused staff survey workshops •Wellbeing room created • Lunchtime Learn programme established • Collaborative team working space in place • April 2026 - Outdoor area opened to staff • April 2026 - Work underway with OD partner on a leadership charter to support internal culture and engagement •May 2026 – annual staff survey issued to all staff. • June 2026 - Results shared with all staff • July 2026 - Employee Satisfaction Survey results show improvement in 19/24 areas (c.80%) when compared to 2024/25 survey	This action has moved beyond the initial improvement phase and will now be managed within business-as-usual processes to ensure improvements are embedded, sustained and further developed.		• Staff agree their wellbeing is valued and can see improvements **Impact** • Strengthened evidence base for understanding wellbeing, engagement and areas of concern* Improved trust, morale and confidence • Improved wellbeing, engagement and retention – positively influencing performance and resilience	**Potential impact indicators** • Improved participation in staff surveys and staff forums • Evidence that staff feedback is acted upon • Increased confidence among staff that views can be raised safely and constructively and that leadership is receptive • Reduced staff turnover, absence or stress-related issues

Review TVCA staff induction process to improve organisational awareness and understanding of governance and finance processes.

Accountable Director	Initially identified key steps	Key Milestones/Progress June 2025-July 2026	Ongoing steps to embed	Revised dates (if applicable)	Overarching measure of success	Evidence
	Review existing induction content and work with governance, procurement & finance teams to build fit for purpose induction content.	•Induction content to cover Governance and Procurement is created and Finance contribution will complete this requirement. •To support understanding of developing finance processes and procedures finance are also developing good relationships with Heads of Service and Budget managers. •CEX quarterly meet and greets to commence from April 2026 for all new starters. •The Tees Valley bus tour, part of the induction process, has been widened to include existing staff. Staff members also deliver the content for the bus tours. •Each team will complete a lunch and learn on who they are and what they do and the intranet will have staff grouped by Directorate/team with a written overview of what they do as a ready artefact for staff to access. •Full lunch and learn programme developed. •A new values-linked induction video has been created •An induction feedback survey is issued to all new	This action has moved beyond the initial improvement phase and will now be managed within business-as-usual processes to ensure improvements are embedded, sustained and further developed.		New induction process rolled out to staff. **Impact** • Improved organisational awareness and understanding of governance and finance processed from the outset of employment • Earlier confidence, compliance and effective decision making from staff • Reduction in risk from misunderstandings, informal practice or ad-hoc guidance	**Potential impact indicators** • Induction includes clear content on governance structures, decision making and finance processes • Feedback from staff in relation to confidence and understanding • Reduced instances of non-compliance • Increased confidence from senior officers, finance and governance teams that staff have appropriate baseline knowledge

		starters post-induction to continually improve this key activity •April 2026 – Induction sessions with CEX for new starters commenced. • April 2026 – Staff induction has been overhauled to clarify TVCA purpose, mission and strategic objectives to new starters and includes specific reference to finance, governance and an overview of procurement • June 2026 - Process and checklist for agency staff has been developed to support organisational understanding amongst non-permanent staff members • June 2026 - Principles of governance and organisation governance structure presented at All Staff briefing to refresh/improve knowledge.				
Actions complete – ongoing steps to embed.						
Embed appraisal process that ensures individual accountability through clear objective setting, which is aligned to team and organisational priorities and robust performance management.						
Accountable Director	**Initially identified key steps**	**Key Milestones/Progress June 2025 - July 2026**	**Ongoing steps for implementation**	**Revised dates (if applicable)**	**Overarching measure of success**	**Evidence**
SB/CW	Run training sessions for appraising managers on effective objective setting to ensure consistency. Create a process that overlays the appraisal incremental time points (6month and annual) whereby objectives review is more fluid to create accountability.	•Reviews have concluded to understand the capability, capacity, skills including gaps competencies and leadership against the priorities, budget; essentially a SWOT or PESTLE analysis. • The LGA have been engaged and have supplied a workforce development plan roadmap. This includes where they can support. This will be a long-term piece of work. • Budgets have been set for each Directorate which will underpin the structure. • April 2026 - Appraisal results compiled by Directorate for Directors •April 2026 - LGA undertaking a review of the appraisal process •March 2026 - October 2026 and ongoing - Directors will receive a compilation of the objectives set for all in their Directorate including rankings of performance. •May 2026 - Objective setting training to be incorporated into implementation of workforce development strategy	• July/August 2026 - Outcome of LGA review of appraisal process Review of existing appraisal process now to be conducted by external provider as part of combined programme which will also include manager development training (to be delivered by November 2026) • September 2026 - Updated appraisal cycle commencing 01/09/26	November 2026	Appraisal process is embedded. Objectives are demonstrably achieved or action is taken to address this. **Impact** • Strengthened individual accountability • More effective performance management • Earlier identification of performance issues and development needs – enabling timely support, challenge and improvement • Improved performance, engagement and fairness	**Potential impact indicators** • Objectives are set and are aligned to team plans and organisational priorities • Consistent completion of appraisals • Improved identification and management of performance issues and development needs * Feedback from managers in relation to increased confidence in setting objectives and managing performance
Develop and implement a workforce development strategy, to ensure a sustainable and high performing FINANCE function.						
Accountable Director	**Initially identified key steps**	**Key Milestones/Progress June 2025-July 2026**	**Ongoing steps for implementation**	**Revised dates (if applicable)**	**Overarching measure of success**	**Evidence**
SB/CW	Create baseline assessments of workforce - identify skills gaps - creation of team and individual development plans. Develop a draft strategy for consideration and agreement by TVCA Senior Leadership Team. Set out the	The Interim Finance & Resources Director was appointed in July 2025 and undertook an immediate review of the short-term requirements. •This review concluded that the existing team was small and flat in structure, with no separation of the three key elements of a full finance function:	• Recruitment of permanent Finance & Resources Director (S73) officer		Production of a workforce development strategy which is clear on the steps to achieve a high performing workforce. Staff Utilise staff surveys to monitor impact.	

	steps for implementation over the short medium and long term.	•financial management •financial accounting & reporting •treasury management •Additionally, the skillset and experience of team members were not necessarily aligned with activity being undertaken. •August - September 2025 - An interim structure was established. •Interim resource has been secured to ensure that the team is fit for purpose in the short-term. •Additional specialist support has been brought in where necessary, with resources added on a controlled, as needed basis. •This interim structure has been designed to undertake the full financial review and implement the improvements needed. •Formulation of Finance team structure has been developed by the Interim Group Director of Finance and Resources with support from HR. •Staff are now assigned to one of the three functions noted above, improving clarity and accountability. •Additional specialist support has been brought in where necessary, with resources added on a controlled, as needed basis. •Dedicated resource aligned to finance processes and improvements. •November 2025 - Updated structure discussed with the Executive Leadership Team (ELT) •December 2025 - Shared with the IAB as part of the Use of Resources Deep Dive given on 8 December 2025. • March 2026 - recruitment process for S73 Officer did not result in an appointment. Contract extension agreed with interim Finance & Resources Director. • Governance and appointments report made to Cabinet on 24th April 2026 to inform that no appointment could be made – details provided of extended interim arrangements •April 2026 - Proposed structure and recruitment needs for finance function presented to CEO and business case prepared for new structure • May 2026 - Update on status of Director recruitment provided to IAB • May 2026 - Proposed structure for finance team presented to IAB. • May 2026 - LGA retention maturity model being adopted as part of workforce development plan • June 2026 - Cabinet updated on progress in relation to recruitment of permanent FD • July 2026 – Recruitment for finance team vacancies has commenced	• May 2026 onwards - transition from the interim finance arrangements and commence the recruitment of the vacant finance posts.		**Impact** • Finance function better equipped to meet organisational needs • Improved recruitment, retention and skills development • Reduced reliance on interim or ad-hoc capacity • Improved quality of financial advice to members and senior leaders	**Potential impact indicators** • Improved retention rates and reduced interim reliance in finance function • Evidence that finance staff have the right skills and competencies to support function • Improved feedback from senior officers, members and auditors on quality of financial advice • Identified succession plans for key finance roles and reduced single-point dependency risks • Fewer finance-related audit issues
Develop and implement a workforce development strategy, to ensure a sustainable and high-performing GOVERNANCE function.						

Accountable Director	Initially identified key steps	Key Milestones/Progress June 2025-July 2026	Ongoing steps for implementation	Revised dates (if applicable)	Overarching measure of success	Evidence
SB/CW	Create baseline assessments of workforce - identify skills gaps - creation of team and individual development plans. Develop a draft strategy for consideration and agreement by TVCA Senior Leadership Team. Set out the steps for implementation over the short medium and long term.	•Interim legal & governance team structure implemented. •Additional Interim resources brought in both legal and governance to strengthen the existing structure, improving the level of internal expertise and reducing reliance on external legal support. •New approach to Information Governance implemented with dedicated team. •Recruitment process to recruit permanent Chief Legal & Monitoring Officer underway. • March 2026 - recruitment process for permanent Chief Legal & Monitoring Officer did not result in an appointment. Contract extension agreed with Interim Monitoring Officer. • April 2026 - governance team development session delivered by OD partner • May 2026 - Interim Head of Governance in post • May 2026 - Update on status of Director recruitment provided to IAB • June 2026 - Monitoring Officer appointment approved by Cabinet	• March 2026 onwards - recruit to the vacant roles in the legal & governance team.		Production of a workforce development strategy which is clear on the steps to achieve a high performing workforce. Staff Utilise staff surveys to monitor impact. **<u>Impact</u>** • A sustainable, resilient and high-performing service capable of underpinning effective decision making and assurance • Improved quality of governance advice and support • Reduction of single-point dependency risks and improved continuity • Strengthened compliance, assurance and confidence in governance arrangements	**<u>Potential impact indicators</u>** • Reduced reliance on short-term/reactive capacity • Demonstrable skills and expertise to support governance requirements • Improved feedback from members and senior officers on the quality of governance support • Identified succession plans for key governance roles and reduced single-point dependency risk

Recruit a permanent Chief Executive (CEX) and recruit to the vacant Director posts and ensure appropriate input from the S73 Chief Finance Officer and Monitoring Officer in the senior leadership team.

All future recruitment will be undertaken in accordance with the new and emerging cultural values of the organisation. All senior leaders will be expected to exhibit, champion and inspire the behaviours of cultural change.

Accountable Director	Initially identified key steps	Key Milestones/Progress June 2025-July 2026	Ongoing steps for implementation	Revised dates (if applicable)	Overarching measure of success	Evidence
TB	•Engage with external recruitment agency for CEX post •Undertake process to recruit remaining Director vacancies	•Permanent CEO appointed by Cabinet in June 2025 •Interim Financial Director and Monitoring Officer in post •Cabinet agreed approach to recruit permanent Finance Director and Monitoring Officer • Recruitment of permanent Finance Director and Monitoring Officer began w/c 19 January, with closing date of 15 Feb • March 2026 - recruitment process for permanent Finance Director and Monitoring Officer did not result in appointments. Contract extensions agreed with Interim Monitoring Office and Interim Finance Director • Governance and appointments report made to Cabinet on 24th April 2026 to inform that no appointment could be made Cabinet approved extension of interim arrangements • June 2026 - Monitoring Officer appointment approved by Cabinet • June 2026 - Cabinet updated on progress in relation to recruitment of permanent FD.	• Recruitment of permanent Finance & Resources Director (S73) officer • May 2026 onwards - transition from the interim finance, governance and legal arrangements and commence the recruitment of the vacant finance posts.		Recruitment concluded. High performing senior leadership team. Recoding of improved data. **<u>Impact</u>** • Strengthened leadership stability, capacity and accountability • Improved financial, legal and governance assurance at the highest level • Reinforcement of consistent leadership behaviours • Improved confidence, cohesion and organisational performance	**<u>Potential impact indicators</u>** • Permanent CEX and Director posts are filled • Reduced reliance on interim arrangements • Effective and visible contribution of S73 and Monitoring Officer within senior leadership team • Senior appointments demonstrably align with TVCA values

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Develop and implement a workforce development strategy, to ensure expertise and experience across TVCA & the constituent local authorities are fully utilised in support of continued organisational improvement						
Accountable Director	**Initially identified key steps**	**Key Milestones/Progress June 2025 - July 2026**	**Next steps and dates**	**Revised dates (if applicable)**	**Overarching measure of success**	**Evidence**
SB	Develop a draft strategy for consideration and agreement by TVCA Senior Leadership Team. Set out the steps for implementation over the short medium and long term.	• Consultation with and input from constituent LAs for development of TVCA improvement plan. • TVCA resource specifically dedicated to organisational improvement - 'Programme Manager – Improvement' seconded from within TVCA • Dedicated working groups established to track improvement progress across key themes. Membership of groups made up from across TVCA to ensure relevant expertise and knowledge e.g. HR, Governance, Finance • Improvement standing item at weekly Director meetings • Shared service agreements in place between TVCA and LAs to enable effective workforce deployment and provide efficiencies • PDMs employed at TVCA who also work for LAs • Local Authority attendance on panels • Regular attendance at cross-region working groups • Informal networking and liaison between TVCA Directors and counterparts at constituent LAs • April 2026 - Appointment of 'Programme Coordinator – Improvement' to support organisational improvement progress tracking • July 2026: Business Tees Valley Programme report to Cabinet provides evidence of collaborative working and shared ownership between TVCA and constituent Local Authorities	• June-September – workforce development strategy to continue, update to be provided to all staff at the staff briefing. • July-September – Staged approach to implementation of workforce development once final plan agreed		Production of a workforce development strategy which incorporates deployment of expertise and experience across TVCA and constituent local authorities **Impact** • Better use of existing skills and expertise meaning more efficient service delivery and value for money • Increased resilience and long-term sustainability • More stable workforce • Adaptive organisation which can respond effectively to change	**Potential impact indicators** • Number of cross-authority projects or joint initiatives • Uptake of shared resources • Staff participation in cross-organisational networks or forums • Evidence of duplication being reduced across authorities
Actions in progress – nearing completion						
Develop and implement a workforce development strategy through a demand and skills analysis, to ensure appropriate capacity and capability, across the organisation, focused on Cabinet approved priorities.						
Develop and implement a workforce development strategy, to enhance skills and knowledge at all levels within the organisation.						
Accountable Director	**Initially identified key steps**	**Key Milestones/Progress June 2025 - July 2026**	**Next steps and dates**	**Revised dates (if applicable)**	**Overarching measure of success**	**Evidence**
CW/SB	Create baseline assessments of workforce - identify skills gaps - creation of team and individual development plans. Develop a draft strategy for consideration and agreement by TVCA Senior Leadership Team. Set out the steps for implementation over the short medium and long term.	•Action strongly correlates to the Operating Model and Organisational Development work as described above. •Action is overarching and links across the Improvement Plan. •The outcome of linked actions will help further inform the progress and timeline for a strengthened operating model. •Discussions are ongoing with Cabinet on the Strategic Framework which will inform this. •The people plan is now referred to as the Workforce Development Plan.	• June-September – workforce development strategy to continue, update to be provided to all staff at the staff briefing. • July-September – Staged approach to implementation of workforce development once final plan agreed. • June-September - Job evaluation and internal benchmarking to be carried out in relation to impact of devolution on resourcing		Production of a workforce development strategy which is clear on the steps to achieve a high performing workforce. Staff utilise staff surveys to monitor impact. **Impact** • Capacity and capability to deliver on Cabinet-approved	**Potential impact indicators** • Workforce development strategy clearly links capacity and

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		•The plan will review how directorates and teams will be structured, •Providing the framework for decision making and delegations. •A mapping exercise has begun to provide the basis for this work. •Engaging support from the LGA to undertake a capacity and capability review that will inform the wider Workforce Development Strategy—addressing current needs in addition to strategic priorities and future requirements of the organisation, including those associated with further devolution. •Plan of stakeholder engagement has been developed in partnership with Local Authorities. •Reviews have concluded to understand the capability, capacity, skills including gaps competencies and leadership against the priorities, budget; essentially a SWOT or PESTLE analysis. •The LGA have been engaged and have supplied a workforce development plan roadmap. This includes where they can support. This will be a long-term piece of work. •Budgets have been set for each Directorate which will underpin the structure. •March 2026 – Implementation plan to be defined which incorporates the roadmap, which has been supported by the LGA and includes internal engagement activities. •April 2026 – First draft of workforce development plan to be complete and approved by TVCA ELT. • May 2026 - Work continued in developing the workforce development strategy with TVCA directors. • May 2026 - Road map for implementation developed with Directors.	• Workforce development plan is linked to strategic priorities for the Authority including future devolution.		priorities • More effective workforce planning, ability to anticipate skills gaps, manage pressure points and deploy resources effectively • Improved delivery confidence and organisational performance	capability plans to priorities and delivery programmes • Completion of demand and skills analysis • Reduced reliance on short-term, reactive solutions • Learning, recruitment and development activity is focused on priority skills – not generic provision • Increased confidence from Cabinet and senior leadership that the workforce has capacity and capability to deliver on priorities

Continuous Improvement						
Actions complete						
Ensure progress against the actions contained within the Organisational Improvement Plan is effectively monitored, working closely with the constituent local authorities and the Independent Improvement Board, and reported in a transparent manner to Cabinet, the Improvement Board, the Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government (MHCLG) and EY (external auditor).						
Accountable Director	**Initially identified key steps**	**Key Milestones/Progress June 2025-July 2026**	**Ongoing steps to embed**	**Revised dates (if applicable)**	**Overarching measure of success**	**Evidence**
SB	• Regular engagement with all stakeholders, building relationships. • Set up report structure for both internal and external reporting at agreed frequency. • Set up spreadsheet to show progress against each action or KPI. • Attend Improvement Board and MHCLG meetings providing previous minutes and recording any actions.	•IAB meetings in place •Initial partner/stakeholder workshops held May/June 25 •Follow up workshops concluded in Jan/Feb 26 •Improvement Plan progress built into Governance structure •Regular engagement with partners and stakeholders implemented and continuing •Reporting structure agreed and in place •Governance process in relation to IAB and MHCLG well established and ongoing	This action has moved beyond the initial improvement phase and will now be managed within business-as-usual processes to ensure improvements are embedded, sustained and further developed.		Clear & regular reporting, timely meeting papers, improved/positive feedback. **Impact** • To provide clear assurance that agreed actions are being delivered as intended and within agreed timescales	**Potential impact indicators** • Clear, up-to-date tracking of all actions with milestones, owners and timescales

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		•Forward plan for IAB implemented and considered with the Chair and Board members monthly •Review of actions and progress undertaken •Refreshed presentation of progress, to include impacts and evidence. •January - Review of action plan complete. •January - IAB meeting deep-dive on Partnerships & Continuous Improvement •February - Increased contact with IAB and committee members •February - Informal IAB meeting •March - IAB meeting deep dive on Culture •March - Implementation plans and trackers in place for five priority themes • May 2026 - Improvement Plan Progress Report presented at IAB meeting. • June 2026 - 'Organisational Improvement' was included within 2026/27 portfolio responsibilities, with a Cabinet member, Mayor Chris Cooke, appointed as portfolio holder to strengthen political oversight and accountability. • July 2026: Improvement implications explicitly set out within Cabinet reports • July 2026: Organisational improvement update report provided to IAB			• Strengthened shared ownership, external challenge and collective accountability for improvement • Increased confidence in TVCA's commitment to openness, learning and continuous improvement • Clear oversight will support early identification of risks and timely corrective action	• Evidence of effective challenge and input from the Independent Improvement Board • Timely, accurate progress reports provided to Cabinet, the Improvement Board, MHCLG and EY
Undertake an assessment and identify any new actions to ensure that we are striving for excellence in the remaining categories set out in the statutory guidance on best value standards and interventions (not covered in the Best Value Notice or by the external auditor statutory letter), which are leadership and service delivery.						
Accountable Director	**Initially identified key steps**	**Key Milestones/Progress June 2025-July 2026**	**Ongoing steps to embed**	**Revised dates (if applicable)**	**Overarching measure of success**	**Evidence**
SB	Undertake assessment. Agree actions and develop implementation plan.	•Initial assessment of the remaining areas in the Best Value Notice guidance has undertaken and will be appropriately included as part of continuous improvement. •TVCA have engaged with an Organisational Development partner who is providing leadership support further details provided in the Culture section of this update. •Service delivery actions are integrated within the improvement plan in multiple areas, such as the strategic framework, scheme of delegation. • July 2026: Organisation Continuous Improvement strategy in development	This action has moved beyond the initial improvement phase and will now be managed within business-as-usual processes to ensure improvements are embedded, sustained and further developed.		• Through continuous monitoring a clear positive direction of travel can be demonstrated. **Impact** • To provide assurance that TVCA is striving for excellence beyond compliance* More proactive approach to continuous improvement • Improved organisational effectiveness and delivery confidence • Reduced risk of future intervention	**Potential impact indicators** • Completion and documentation of structured assessment against statutory standards for leadership and service delivery • Improvement actions are identified where gaps or opportunities are available • New actions are incorporated into the Organisational Improvement Plan
Actions in progress nearing completion						
Develop and implement a new organisation-wide operating model to improve processes, efficiency, understanding and quality.						

Accountable Director	Initially identified key steps	Key Milestones/Progress June 2025-July 2026	Next steps and dates	Revised dates (if applicable)	Overarching measure of success	Evidence
SB	Set out how directorates and teams will be structured and where decision making will sit in order to create a set of general accountabilities for Directors, which are expressed through their objectives to deliver against the policies set out by the Combined Authority. Create a scheme of delegation that covers specific delegations or requirements for compliance where officers are fulfilling these accountabilities. Undertake an internal review of existing polices & processes, identify gaps and improvements to be made, implement any changes and roll out any appropriate internal & external communications.	•Finance and Governance have been prioritised for review. •Work on officer schemes of delegation, approval systems, and related processes is progressing. •Scoping for Workforce Development Plan has taken place - detailed in Culture tab. •HR have conducted research on requirements with ELT. •A review of the Scheme of Delegation has commenced, linked to the refresh of the Assurance Framework and broader governance matters. •Reviews of existing policies and processes have been undertaken across several themes relevant to the improvement plan and business-as-usual activity. •Implementation of any updates will take place at the earliest suitable opportunity, with internal and external consultation and communication carried out where required. • April 2026 - Benchmarking analysis of MCA schemes of delegation underway	•Ongoing - Strengthened operating model is an outcome of the action plan. •March -September 2026 - Adoption and implementation related and key strategic items, including: •Updated Constitution •Single Assurance Framework •Governance Review outcome •Long-term priority setting •Local Growth Plan •Spatial Development Strategy •Investment pipeline •Workforce Development Strategy		Agreed operating model is rolled out and understood. Staff can report via surveys understanding of high-level objectives and where their role impacts these. **<u>Impact</u>** • Improved consistency, efficiency and understanding of how TVCA works across functions and teams • Improved clarification on roles, processes and decision making routes • Enhanced quality and timeliness of work – more effective delivery of organisational priorities	**<u>Potential impact indicators</u>** • Clearly defined operating model is agreed, communicated and understood across the organisation • Evidence of streamlined processes – reduction in duplication, re-work or delay • Improved consistency and quality of outputs – aligned to agreed standards and ways of working
Implement a Programme Management Office (PMO), with standardised processes and tools, to ensure consistency in terms of how the organisation develops, manages and monitors projects and programmes.						
Accountable Director	**Initially identified key steps**	**Key Milestones/Progress June 2025 – July 2026**	**Next steps and dates**	**Revised dates (if applicable)**	**Overarching measure of success**	**Evidence**
SB	Explore the structure of a PMO style model within TVCA to ensure it is fit for purpose and specific to TVCA. implement a fit for purpose PMO style model.	• Pre-market engagement undertaken and concluded • Next steps were considered. • The requirement of a PMO model would follow an updated operating model.	•Ongoing- Once operating model is reviewed and updated, based on the outcomes noted above a PMO model will be considered at a later phase.		An appropriate PMO 'model' is in place for TVCA. Demonstrable benefits of the PMO can be seen & recorded. **<u>Impact</u>** • Strengthened organisational grip on delivery through consistent oversight of projects and programmes • Improved clarity, discipline and comparability in how initiatives are developed, managed and reported – reducing variation and delivery risk • Earlier identification of issues • Clearer accountability and more informed decision making • Improved delivery confidence, value for money and outcomes	**<u>Potential impact indicators</u>** • Set of project and programme management processes and tools are in place and used consistently • Clear, regular reporting through the PMO • Evidence of improved identification, escalation and management of project/programme risks, issues and dependencies • Evidence of improved timeliness and quality of project/programme delivery
Actions for future consideration						

Take part in a Local Government Association (LGA) peer review in 18-24 months and seek external support and challenge from the LGA, the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy (CIPFA) and the Centre for Governance and Scrutiny (CFGS) to support the Organisational Improvement Plan.						
SB	Liaise with LGA/CIPFA/CFGS for peer review and external support & challenge. Agree dates & timescales.	•Engagement and support from LGA, CIPFA, and CfGS is being accessed to support the improvement journey. •Details on specific actions and workstreams are reflected within the relevant action updates throughout this report. •Discussions have taken place with the LGA about bringing forward a Peer Review ahead of the originally proposed timeline. •April 2026 - Further scoping work undertaken.	•Dates for the Peer Review will be agreed at an appropriate point following scoping and development of Peer Review Implementation Plan.		• Agreed dates with each planned into TVCA timescales •benchmarking/improved position recorded & continually measured. **<u>Impact</u>** • Independent assurance on the effectiveness and maturity of TVCA's improvement journey • Enhanced quality and credibility of Organisational Improvement Plan • Demonstrable openness, transparency and commitment to learning beyond compliance • Strengthened organisational confidence, resilience and readiness for future scrutiny	**<u>Potential impact indicators</u>** • Peer review completed within agreed timeframe • Evidence that advice and challenge from LGA, CIPFA and CfGS is actively informing improvement activity • External recommendations are incorporated into the Organisational Improvement Plan • Open reporting to Cabinet, the improvement board and relevant stakeholders

Information
Following feedback and internal reflection, the action plan has been refreshed for future updates. While the headline actions remain unchanged, a review has taken place which has refined how progress is presented, to ensure greater clarity. To reduce duplication, some actions have been merged or repositioned, these changes are articulated below. In addition, the order of some actions has been changed in some instances and where appropriate actions have been grouped under headings to ensure that interconnected activities are reported together.

Details of changes made to columns
Status column has been removed as actions are grouped under status headings as described above
Details of impact added
Column for evidence added

Changes to Theme headings
As the organisation progresses on its improvement journey, we have begun reporting on Partnerships and Continuous Improvement separately.

Changes made to location of actions	
Action	Update

Take part in a Local Government Association (LGA) peer review in 18-24 months and seek external support and challenge from the LGA, the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy (CIPFA) and the Centre for Governance and Scrutiny (CFGS) to support the Organisational Improvement Plan.	Moved from Partnerships and Continuous Improvement Tab to stand alone Continuous Improvement tab
Implement a Programme Management Office (PMO), with standardised processes and tools, to ensure consistency in terms of how the organisation develops, manages and monitors projects and programmes.	Moved from Partnerships and Continuous Improvement Tab to stand alone Continuous Improvement tab
Develop and implement a new organisation-wide operating model to improve processes, efficiency, understanding and quality.	Moved from Partnerships and Continuous Improvement Tab to stand alone Continuous Improvement tab
Ensure progress against the actions contained within the Organisational Improvement Plan is effectively monitored, working closely with the constituent local authorities and the Independent Improvement Board, and reported in a transparent manner to Cabinet, the Improvement Board, the Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government (MHCLG) and EY (external auditor).	Moved from Partnerships and Continuous Improvement Tab to stand alone Continuous Improvement tab
Undertake an assessment and identify any new actions to ensure that we are striving for excellence in the remaining categories set out in the statutory guidance on best value standards and interventions (not covered in the Best Value Notice or by the external auditor statutory letter), which are leadership and service delivery.	Moved from Partnerships and Continuous Improvement Tab to stand alone Continuous Improvement tab
Undertake an assessment and identify any new actions to ensure that we are striving for excellence in the remaining categories set out in the statutory guidance on best value standards and interventions (not covered in the Best Value Notice (BVN) or by the external auditor statutory letter), which are leadership, use of resources and service delivery.	
Produce a readiness plan for fiscal devolution, including a potential future integrated settlement, and new accountability arrangements as set out in the Devolution White Paper.	Moved from Use of Resources to Governance and merged with action below
Undertake a business planning exercise and produce a readiness plan in anticipation of the expanded powers set out in the Devolution White Paper.	Merged and presented under the Governance tab
Produce a readiness plan for fiscal devolution, including a potential future integrated settlement, and new accountability arrangements as set out in the Devolution White Paper.	