

Tees Valley Combined Authority Organisational Improvement Plan Update – April 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 matters addressed 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.

The table below shows a high-level summary of progress per theme, detailed updates per action are documented throughout the update, and supplemented by regular reporting to TVCA Cabinet and the Independent Advisory Board.

Theme	Total actions	Complete	Complete – ongoing steps to embed	In progress – nearing completion	In progress	Not started	Progress overall
Partnerships	3	2	1	0	0	0	100%
Use of Resources	4	0	3	1	0	0	75%
Governance	18	8	3	2	5	0	61%
Culture	14	7	4	0	3	0	79%
Continuous Improvement	4	2	0	0	2	0	50%
Total % complete							69%

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, 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. Nearing completion refers to actions that are due to be complete in June, July or September 2026.

TVCA is committed to continuous improvement and while actions have been complete the actions identified within this plan and wider improvement work will be continued to be embedded and strengthened as part of continuous improvement.

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.

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 – April 2026	Ongoing steps to embed	Revised dates (if applicable)	Overarching measure of success	Evidence
TB	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 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. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 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 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ongoing - TVCA CEO to continue to work strategically with the TV CEXs group. CEX and wider Governance arrangements are being discussed and considered as part of the Governance Review action which relates to the Single Assurance Framework and its implementation plan and refresh of the Constitution. 		Implementation of Tees Valley Strategic Leadership Team meetings	CEX Agendas
					Positive feedback and demonstrable impact of the working arrangements received	Potential impact indicators
					Intended impact	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Attendance and active participation of members Progress against shared priority workstreams Feedback from members, delivery partners, external reviewers
					<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Collective leadership and strategic alignment More coordinated and efficient delivery of priority workstreams Earlier identification and resolution of cross-organisational risks 	

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 – April 2026	Ongoing steps to embed	Revised dates (if applicable)	Overarching measure of success	Evidence
TB	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Implement a series of workshops for priority setting Engage key partners and Members Ensure the workshops fit with the corporate calendar. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 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 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Action complete – Forms part of Continuous Improvement and is an iterative process that will continue to embed the new way of working, to ensure robust strategic planning for all committees and informal engagement in advance of meetings. 		Partners and key stakeholders understand long-term plans and provide positive/improved feedback on meaningful engagement.	
					Intended impact	Potential impact indicators
					<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Strengthened alignment between TVCA and constituent LAs Improved buy-in to agreed priorities More effective use of collective resources 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Evidence of political involvement e.g. workshops, joint sessions Formal agreement and commitment to shared priorities Improved confidence from members and senior officers

		<p>approach taken was described as an exemplar in local partnership delivery by the Department for Work and Pensions.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> •New committee report development process implemented, with pre-committee engagement 				
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Actions complete – ongoing steps to embed

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 – April 2026	Next steps and dates	Revised dates (if applicable)	Overarching measure of success	Evidence
CP	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Engage Partners and Stakeholders to develop a plan • Work with Partners and Stakeholders to implement and embed plan 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Reinstated regular Heads of Communications meetings with TVCA & 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 Business Community •Working with 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 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • March 2026 - Shared with partners and Cabinet Members (Local Authority Leaders) for agreement via email requesting feedback. <i>This date was not achieved due to actioning of comprehensive feedback from IAB member Dame Amanda Milling</i> • 31 March 2026 – Expected full completion, considering comments followed. <i>As above</i> • 1 April 2026 – Implementation. <i>As above and also impacted by local elections</i> 	<p>May 2026 – Share draft strategy with partners, Cabinet members (LA leaders) via email for feedback and approval</p> <p>June 2026 – Completion of strategy</p> <p>July 2026 – Commence implementation of strategy</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clear, easily accessible information for the public that meets with legislation and best practice 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Engagement plan •TOR of group •Examples of press releases which show increased visibility of Cabinet portfolio leads
					Intended Impact	Potential impact indicators
					<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improvement in public perception and confidence • Strengthened leadership visibility and accountability for portfolio holders • Reduction in reactive communications 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Media sentiment analysis (positive v negative coverage) • No of FoI requests • Public engagement metrics • Portfolio holder feedback

Use of Resources

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 15th April 2025.

Accountable Director	Initially identified Key Steps	Key Milestones/Progress June 2025 – April 2026	Next steps and dates	Revised dates (if applicable)	Overarching measure of success	Evidence
JM	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Capacity review – <i>addressed under workforce development actions</i> Process review – <i>addressed under review of finance processes and procedures</i> Clear timetable for production of its 2024/25 Statement of Accounts 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 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 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 30th June 2025. It also includes control and integrity checks to ensure accuracy and consistency of amounts reflected in the accounts. Close engagement and transparent reporting to the TVCA Audit & Governance Committee to ensure they are kept up to date with progress. February 2026 - TVCA Submitted 7 of the 8 entities accounts by the statutory backstop date 27th February 2026. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> June 2026 - Ensure that TVCA and the Development Corporations produce a high-quality set of accounts by the publication date for the draft accounts of 30 June 2026. 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. 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 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 	
					Intended Impact	Potential impact indicators
					<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Strengthened governance, financial management and internal controls Improvement in auditor confidence and reduced risk of repeat findings in future audit cycles Improved organisational credibility Demonstrable commitment to improvement 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 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.

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 June 2025 – April 2026	Ongoing steps	Revised dates (if applicable)	Overarching measure of success	Evidence
JM	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> External Audit recommendations evidenced as complete with Auditors 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 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 	<p>Complete - This action is complete and will be part of continuous Improvement. Action links to the Annual Governance statement review action noted within Governance section of this report.</p>		External Audit recommendations evidenced as complete with Auditors	
					Intended Impact	Potential impact indicators
					<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Strengthened assurance, accountability and control Improved transparency Improved oversight of risk management and improvement activity Reduced risk of repeat findings and external challenge 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 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

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 – April 2026	Ongoing steps	Revised dates (if applicable)	Overarching measure of success	Evidence
JM	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 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 Finance Team. Formulation of Finance Team structure options and funding requirements as applicable and recommendations to TVCA Senior Leadership Team and stakeholder groups. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 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: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 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. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Recruitment for permanent Finance & Resources Director (S73) officer is in progress and due to conclude in April 2026. Recruitment process undertaken but did not result in an appointment. Interim resource secured until September 2026, next steps to appoint to the role permanently being considered. Cabinet approved the extension of the current Interim arrangements and will be updated on progress and next steps. May 2026 onwards Transition from the interim finance arrangements and commence the recruitment of the vacant finance posts. 	N/A	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	
					Intended Impact	Potential impact indicators
					<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 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 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 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

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •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 S73 recruitment process did not result in an appointment • 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 				<p>dependency risks</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Fewer finance-related audit issues
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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 – April 2026	Ongoing Steps	Revised dates (if applicable)	Overarching measure of success	Evidence
JM	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •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 - Implement the programme of process improvements and ensure that they are embedded across the organisation. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Continue to update and implement revised processes. •July – September 2026 - Constitution changes to be updated as part of the constitution review. 	N/A	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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 	
					Intended Impact	Potential impact indicators
					<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * 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 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * 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)
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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 – April 2026	Next steps and dates	Revised dates (if applicable)	Overarching measure of success	Evidence
JMc/SB	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Undertake an internal review of the Assurance Framework. Work with partners and Members to update. Seek Cabinet approval 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 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 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 Draft SAF submitted to MHCLG for review following Cabinet endorsement 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A phased approach to the implementation of the constitution and Governance review is in place with key milestones of April, June, July and September Cabinet meetings. <p>The indicative timescale for final SAF:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 26th June 2026 presented to Cabinet - this timescale is subject to MHCLG internal processes for review and feedback 26th June 2026 - Internal implementation plan to support adoption of the approved SAF to be developed to ensuring alignment across the organisation and other actions in this plan - including the constitution review. 		Approval of updated Assurance Framework. Data is available providing evidence of effective assurance processes.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Delivery of Single Assurance Framework. Approval of SAF by MHCLG and other government departments. Completed annual reviews as required.
					Intended Impact	Potential impact indicators
					<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 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 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 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 – April 2026	Next steps and dates	Revised dates (if applicable)	Overarching measure of success	Evidence
JMc	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 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 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 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. 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. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A phased approach to the implementation of the constitution and Governance review is in place with key milestones of April, June, July and September Cabinet meetings. 		Clearly documented process from origin to decision.	Cabinet decision process flow. Established calendar / schedule
					Intended impact	Potential impact indicators
					<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Improved quality and effectiveness of political engagement Members are meaningfully involved from the outset More informed, transparent and defensible decisions Reduction in late challenge and delays Stronger political ownership 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 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 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. – complete

Accountable Director	Initially identified Key Steps	Key Milestones/Progress June 2025 – April 2026	Next steps and dates	Revised dates (if applicable)	Overarching measure of success	Evidence
JMc	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review current format, engage partners and members as appropriate, taking into account best practice. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 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 in place and are in line with CIFRA and SOLACE guidance. Process is established which accords with the best value guidance. April 2026 - All draft AGS complete 	<p>Ongoing - AGS will be incorporated in continuous improvement and used as a tool for improvement going forward.</p> <p>May – June 2026 - The draft TVCA 2025/26 AGS will be presented to Audit & Governance Committee for comment on 21st May with a view to the draft being presented to TVCA Cabinet on 26 June for approval.</p> <p>The aim of this work is to continue to support improved assurance and clearer articulation of governance improvement actions.</p>		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	Approved and updated AGS' through Audit & Governance / Cabinet.
					Intended impact	Potential impact indicators
					<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 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 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 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 – April 2026	Next steps and dates	Revised dates (if applicable)	Overarching measure of success	Evidence
JMc	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 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. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 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 for now rolled out. Linking to the strategic forward plan, clear Cabinet cycles are reporting deadlines are now defined. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ongoing- Report writing training to continue to be rolled out to TVCA staff on an ongoing basis. Ongoing - The framework around report approval continues to be strengthened. 		<p>Demonstrable audit trail of informed decision making. Testing of the process to ensure robustness.</p> <p>Intended impact</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> * 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 	<p>This is in effect a blend of items in relation to governance activity. Process / step identification and reviews of TOR's within the wider governance framework will be supportive.</p> <p>Potential impact indicators</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> * 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 on-going 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 – April 2026	Next steps and dates	Revised dates (if applicable)	Overarching measure of success	Evidence
JMc	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 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. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 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 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ongoing - continue to deliver and embed 		<p>O&S Committee have shaped and developed the plan, the effectiveness of which can be demonstrated in its work and results.</p>	<p>O&S papers, Oct 2025 onwards</p> <p>Approval of enhanced terms of reference, including the introduction of thematic leads aligned to portfolio areas.</p> <p>Adoption of formal improvement plan and revised approach to work programming.</p> <p>Approval of memorandum of understanding with the Audit & Governance Committee to strengthen role clarity, remit and coordination.</p> <p>Agreement of a 2 year work programme and update on the adoption of the Scrutiny Protocol, confirming over 80% of actions</p>

						<p>enacted and remaining actions on track.</p> <p>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.</p>
					Intended impact	Potential impact indicators
					<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * 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 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * 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 – April 2026	Next steps and dates	Revised dates (if applicable)	Overarching measure of success	Evidence
JMc	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ongoing - Continue to appropriately support statutory committees • Ongoing - Ensure staff training is undertaken by relevant officers 		<p>Review of effectiveness of each Committee.</p> <p>Intended impact</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> * 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 	<p>Potential impact indicators</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> * 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 – April 2026	Ongoing steps to embed	Revised dates (if applicable)	Overarching measure of success	Evidence
TB	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 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 necessary changes to the TVCA Constitution and internal processes. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 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 into 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 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. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ongoing - Work with Cabinet to broaden portfolios to include more key areas of the organisation to increase visibility and provided clearer decision making. Ongoing - Develop Cabinet's collective strength and shared leadership. Ongoing - linked to the wider Governance review - The portfolio arrangements to continue to develop with the aim that portfolio holders' own reports relating to their portfolio in Cabinet meetings. 		Feedback from Cabinet members of shared ownership and contribution.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Defined portfolios within the constitution. Agreed remits / responsibilities that align with authority priorities.
					Identifiable output in decision making and wider governance, which acknowledges the role and remit of portfolio holders.	Potential impact indicators
					Impact	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * 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

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 – April 2026	Ongoing steps to embed	Revised dates (if applicable)	Overarching measure of success	Evidence
JMc	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 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. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 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 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> May 2026 - Create forward plan for workshop sessions to support Cabinet cycle Ongoing- continue to build upon this momentum through continued engagement, using future workshops to deepen strategic alignment, strengthen governance, and ensure that our resources are targeted where they can deliver the greatest impact for the region. 		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.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Schedule of meetings / informal meeting minutes. Circulation of emails / minutes.
					Impact	Potential impact indicators
					<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * 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 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * 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

		<p>and Tees Valley Management Group, in addition to meetings with Local Authority Monitoring Officers and Finance Directors.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A twelve-month Cabinet forward plan for 2026/27 has been developed collaboratively with Cabinet • 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 				
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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 – April 2026	Next steps and dates	Revised dates (if applicable)	Overarching measure of success	Evidence
JMc	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review legislative requirements and terms of reference for each Statutory Committee, engage partners and Committee members in the review, and update the constitution accordingly. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • July 2026 – Follow up review to be complete following adoption of SAF review as detailed on pages 8 & 9, and the English Devolution Empowerment Act 2026 		Revised Terms of References produced.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Streamlined consistent TORs for Committees. - Standardised TORs for advisory groups. - Templates
					Evidence of training and feedback from Committee members.	
					Changes reflected in governance processes and Constitution.	
					Intended impact	Potential impact indicators
					<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * 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 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * 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

Implement a new Member induction process and on-going 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 – April 2026	Next steps and dates	Revised dates (if applicable)	Overarching measure of success	Evidence
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JMc	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Request feedback from Members and stakeholders on the current induction process. Develop Member induction process for Cabinet and all Statutory Committees. 	Collaborative approach to be developed to discuss roles and responsibilities Review and refresh of member induction to be undertaken	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> June 2026 - New member induction to be rolled out Ongoing - ongoing programme of development to be established. 		All new committee members complete the induction within an agreed timeframe following of appointment. Ongoing programme implemented	Member / Officer statutory training matrix to address legislative / constitutional requirements.
					Intended impact	Potential impact indicators
					<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 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 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 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

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 – April 2026	Next steps and dates	Revised dates (if applicable)	Overarching measure of success	Evidence
TB	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Establish baseline and progress against recommendations and develop action plan to address outstanding actions. Develop and implement continuous improvement actions. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 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.	Secondary reviews by CFGS / CIPFA to provide concluding remarks against recommendations.
					Intended impact	Potential impact indicators
					<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 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 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 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 – April 2026	Next steps and dates	Revised dates (if applicable)	Overarching measure of success	Evidence
JMc	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Undertake internal review of processes, sub-divide to directorate/teams, identify changes to be made. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Initial review of Governance processes and procedures undertaken. Following this review items that required immediate attention were prioritised. Following this review at its meeting 	A phased approach to the implementation of the constitution and Governance review is in place with key milestones of April, June, July and September Cabinet meetings.		Clear, demonstrable and effective governance processes demonstrated through positive feedback from Members, partners	Evidence will be more generally holistic in approach. As it will encompass several areas of review.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify stakeholders and consultees and decision making needed i.e. from Cabinet. Incorporate review by formalising each process into TVCA governance structure. 	<p>on 12 December Cabinet considered Governance items as detailed below:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 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 <p>•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 and made no amendments and supported the recommendation to Cabinet to approve the Public Code of Conduct. •Audit and Governance committee to consider SAF design principles on 20 February 2026. • April 2026: Review of process and documentation relating to for 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</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 27 June 2026 - Review of Mayoral Decision-making process and notices. 30 July 2026 - Internal process review to be complete <p>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 Organisation operating model.</p>		<p>and stakeholders and understanding of key processes by TVCA staff</p>		
						Intended Impact	Potential Impact Indicators
						<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 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 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 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

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 – April 2026	Next steps and dates	Revised dates (if applicable)	Overarching measure of success	Evidence	
JMc	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 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. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 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 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> July 2026 – Follow up review to be complete following adoption of SAF review as detailed on pages 8 & 9, and the English Devolution Empowerment Act 2026. 		Coherent committee and non-statutory advisory group structure that supports the authority and work of Cabinet. Demonstrated in Committee effectiveness reviews.	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.	
						Intended impact	Potential impact indicators

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review undertaken 			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * 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 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * 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
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Actions in progress

Actions linked to Constitution Review

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 – April 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.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •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. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A phased approach to the implementation of the constitution and Governance review is in place with key milestones of April, June, July and September Cabinet meetings. • The fully revised Constitution will be considered by the Audit & Governance and Overview & Scrutiny Committees and the pre-Cabinet engagement process, in advance of being presented to Cabinet for approval on 26 June 2026. • Revised, fit of purpose constitution to be taken considered by the pre-cabinet engagement framework with a view to a final report going to Cabinet for decision in July 2026. 		Revised Constitution is agreed at TVCA Cabinet. TVCA has clear, demonstrable and effective governance processes	Reviewed constitutions
					<ul style="list-style-type: none"> *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 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * 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

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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. 				
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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 – April 2026	Next steps and dates	Revised dates (if applicable)	Overarching measure of success	Evidence
JMc	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review current Code of Conduct, secure Cabinet sign off and implement changes. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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 2026 - Recruitment of 3 independent persons commenced 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • May 2026 - Undertake review of Code of Conduct and Implement any change • May 2026 - Ensure updated Code of Conduct policy and form and they are on the TVCA website. • 26 June Cabinet – ratification of independent persons 		<p>Revised Code of Conduct that aligns to best practice approved by Cabinet and included in member induction processes.</p> <p>Intended impact</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> * 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 	<p>Revised code embedded into the constitution.</p> <p>Return forms from members with signed Code of Conduct.</p> <p>Potential impact indicator</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> * 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 – April 2026	Next steps and dates	Revised dates (if applicable)	Overarching measure of success	Evidence
JMc	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assess what is currently published against what we are able to share publicly. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Publication Scheme is linked to a wider review of policies linked to data and data protection, this work is in progress • March 2026 - Interim Information Governance Manager commenced role 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • April 2026 – Review of policies to be complete. • May 2026 - Onwards - Prioritisation and implementation 		<p>Revised publication scheme linked to legislative requirements, which is regularly updated and enhanced, with scheduled reviews</p> <p>Intended impact</p>	<p>Clear publication scheme that is public facing and plain English.</p> <p>Potential impact indicators</p>

			of refreshed polices following review.		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Information more easily and proactively available to the public * Improved transparency and openness * Reduction in need for reactive disclosures and FoI requests * Improved levels of public trust and confidence 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * 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 improved confidence in TVCA's approach to transparency
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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. Part complete

[These two actions have been merged – and the top action has been moved from Use of Resources to Governance]

Accountable Director/ Lead Officer	Initially identified Key Steps	Key Milestones/Progress June 2025 – April 2026	Next steps	Revised dates (if applicable)	Overarching measure of success	Evidence
TB/SB	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Produce baseline self-assessment of readiness against best practice using models produced for MCAs who have already progressed through readiness 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 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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, 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. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • March 2026 - A clear timetable to be produced and considered by ELT, linked to timetables for the most immediate 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. • Readiness plan 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. 		<p>Planning exercise.</p> <p>Agree readiness plan.</p> <p>Readiness plan is in place with clear target dates and responsibilities. TVCA Cabinet approved readiness plan</p>	<p>Evidence to be established as the activity on this task continues.</p>
					<p>Intended impact</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> * 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 	<p>Potential impact indicators</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> * 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

Implement a new governance e-agenda and forward planning system to improve efficiency and compliance.						
Accountable Director/ Lead Officer	Initially identified Key Steps	Key Milestones/Progress June 2025 – April 2026	Ongoing steps	Revised dates (if applicable)	Overarching measure of success	Evidence
JMc	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Implement an E-agenda system, & roll out training to staff, partners and members. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 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 on-going 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 we are currently reviewing submissions. 	<p>This work is interlinked with the review of Governance processes and procedures.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> March 2026 – July 2026 - Process reviews to be fully undertaken and addressed, system will be the outcome and support mechanism to embed the improvements. July 2026 – September 2026 – internal training and roll out of systems with a view to being implemented for September Cabinet Cycle. 		<p>Modern.gov works for staff and members with feedback regularly sought and actions taken to address issue</p>	Delivered e-agenda system
					Intended impact	Potential impact indicators
					<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * 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 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * 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

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 – April 2026	Next steps	Revised dates (if applicable)	Overarching measure of success	Evidence
SB/CW	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Procure OD partner to support the OD development Develop the programme of OD for consideration and agreement by TVCA Senior Leadership Team. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 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 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> May 2026 - An initial analysis of TVCA's OD plan and it's aims considered and implementation plan in delivery. 		<p>OD Programme is developed and agreed with clear steps for implementation over the short, medium and long term.</p>	
					Intended Impact	Potential impact indicators
					<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * 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 * 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * 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 – April 2026	Next steps	Revised dates (if applicable)	Overarching measure of success	Evidence
SB/CW	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop Organisational Development (OD) road map, which details a 12-month rolling programme of OD workshops, mentoring, coaching, and supplementary interventions. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 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 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> April-September 2026: initiatives continue to be undertaken and implemented 		Personal Development Plans in place for the CEX and Directors.	
					Intended Impact	Potential impact indicators
					<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 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 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 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 – April 2026	Next steps	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.	<p>Improved internal engagement through introduction of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 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 4 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- 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ongoing - Internal comms plan to continue embedding and adapting Ongoing – Improvement related activity updates included within the internal communication methods. 		Communications plan is agreed and staff are reporting positive feedback (through regular feedback requests) on communication and visibility.	
					Intended impact	Potential impact indicators
					<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 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 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 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

		impact areas. Rolling Q&A document also in place and updated monthly for review by all staff				
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 – April 2026	Next steps	Revised dates (if applicable)	Overarching measure of success	Evidence
SB/CW	Regular staff updates via TVCA intranet - request feedback from staff - on-going staff surveys - Discussion at all staff meetings on progress of embedding change.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 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 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ongoing - continued implementation of strengthened internal communications. May 2026 - Implementation of Director, Heads of Service and Manager meetings to open lines of communication further. 		Evidence shared on TVCA intranet - staff confirm they are informed through regular feedback requests.	
					Intended impact	Potential impact indicators
					<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * 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 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * 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- April 2026	Next steps	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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 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 	•May 2026 The staff survey is structured around the four values and how far embedded the values have been, will be evidenced in its repeat for 2026.		Clear data showing increasing evidence of TVCA staff living our values	
					Intended impact	Potential impact indicators
					<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Strengthened shared culture and ways of working * Improved trust, accountability and consistency 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Evidence that values are reflected in everyday behaviours

		<p>assess technical skills, role competencies and TVCA value alignment.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> •A new induction video has been created that focuses on TVCA's values as the theme <p>Office graphics/wall decals are installed displaying our values also the reception TV screen and intranet.</p>			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Improved engagement and performance 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Consistent demonstration from leaders of TVCA values in their leadership approach * Appraisal process explicitly references and assesses how individuals demonstrate TVCA values * Improved staff perceptions of openness, empathy, collaboration and focus
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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- April 2026	Next steps	Revised dates (if applicable)	Overarching measure of success	Evidence
SB/CW	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Establish Staff Forum •Staff surveys acted upon •Create 12-month calendar of Lunchtime Learns •Provide multi-purpose space for staff 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •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 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •June 2026 – Repeat the annual staff survey •October 2026- Ongoing - Bi-monthly pulse surveys in tandem with key actions on any lower scoring areas 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Staff agree their wellbeing is valued and can see improvements 	
					Intended impact	Potential impact indicators
					<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * 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 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * 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 June2025- April 2026	Next Steps	Revised dates (if applicable)	Overarching measure of success	Evidence
SB/CW	<p>Review existing induction content and work with governance, procurement & finance teams to build fit for purpose induction content.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •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. 			<p>New induction process rolled out to staff.</p>	
					Intended impact	Potential impact indicators
					<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Improved organisational awareness and understanding of governance and finance processes from the outset of employment * Earlier confidence, compliance 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Induction includes clear content on governance structures, decision-making and finance processes * Feedback from staff in

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •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 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 			<p>and effective decision making from staff</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Reduction in risk from misunderstandings, informal practice or ad-hoc guidance 	<p>relation to confidence and understanding</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Reduced instances of non-compliance * Increased confidence from senior officers, finance and governance teams that staff have appropriate baseline knowledge
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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 – April 2026	Next steps	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.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •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. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •May 2026 - Objective setting training •September 2026 - Updated appraisal cycle commencing 01/09/26 will be supported in advance by the above. 		Appraisal process is embedded. Objectives are demonstrably achieved or action is taken to address this.	
					<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * 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 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * 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 between June 2025 – April 2026	Next steps	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.	<p>The Interim Finance & Resources Director was appointed in July 2025 and undertook an immediate review of the short-term requirements.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 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: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 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) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 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 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> March 2026 (ratified by Cabinet 24 April 2026) - Conclusion of interview process for permanent Finance Director and Monitoring Officer. Recruitment process undertaken but did not result in an appointment. Timings for re-running/next steps of recruitment process to be agreed May 2026 onwards - Transition from the interim finance arrangements and commence the recruitment of the vacant permanent finance posts. 		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.	
					<p>Intended Impact</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> * 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 	<p>Potential impact indicators</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> * 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

		<p>appointment. Contract extension agreed with interim Finance & Resources Director.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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 				
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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 between June 2025 – April 2026	Next steps	Revised dates if applicable	Overarching measure of success	Evidence
SB/CW	<p>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.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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 • March 2026 - Conclusion of interview process for permanent Monitoring Officer. • April 2026 - Appointment to be ratified by Cabinet 24 April 2026. 	<p>Recruitment process for MO undertaken but did not result in an appointment. Timings for re-running/next steps of recruitment process to be agreed – further details provided in Governance & Appointment paper presented to Cabinet</p> <p>• March 2026 onwards - recruit to the vacant permanent roles in the legal & governance team.</p>		<p>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.</p>	
					Intended Impact	Potential impact indicators
					<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * 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 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * 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 – April 2026	Ongoing steps to embed	Revised dates (if applicable)	Overarching measure of success	Evidence
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TB	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Engage with external recruitment agency for CEX post Undertake process to recruit remaining Director vacancies 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 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 – details provided of extended interim arrangements 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> March 2026 (ratified by Cabinet 24 April 2026) - Conclusion of interview process for permanent Finance Director and Monitoring Officer. <p>Recruitment process undertaken but did not result in an appointment. Timings for re-running/next steps of recruitment process to be agreed</p>		<p>Recruitment concluded. High performing senior leadership team. Recoding of improved data.</p>	
					<p>Intended impact</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 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 	<p>Potential impact indicators</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 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

Actions in Progress

Workforce development related actions

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 ensure expertise and experience across TVCA & the constituent local authorities are fully utilised in support of continued organisational improvement

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-March 2026	Next steps	Revised dates (if applicable)	Overarching measure of success	Evidence	
SB/CW	<p>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.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 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. The plan will review how directorates and teams will be structured, 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Workforce development plan is linked to strategic priorities for the Authority including future devolution. 		<p>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.</p>		
						<p>Intended impact</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Capacity and capability to deliver on Cabinet-approved priorities More effective workforce planning, ability to anticipate skills gaps, manage pressure points and deploy resources effectively 	<p>Potential impact indicators</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Workforce development strategy clearly links capacity and capability plans to priorities and delivery programmes Completion of demand and skills analysis Reduced reliance on short-term, reactive solutions

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •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. 			<p>* Improved delivery confidence and organisational performance</p>	<p>* 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</p>
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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-March 2026	Next steps	Revised dates (if applicable)	Overarching measure of success	Evidence
SB	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 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. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 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 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 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ongoing - working with IAB for support and challenge on progress Ongoing - reporting progress as agreed 		<p>Clear & regular reporting, timely meeting papers, improved/positive feedback</p>	
					Intended impact	Potential impact indicators
					<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To provide clear assurance that agreed actions are being delivered as intended and within agreed timescales* 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 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Clear, up-to-date tracking of all actions with milestones, owners and timescales 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-March 2026	Next steps	Revised dates (if applicable)	Overarching measure of success	Evidence
SB	Undertake assessment. Agree actions and develop implementation plan.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 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. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ongoing - adoption and implementation of Continuous Improvement Plan that aligns with Continuous Improvement Assessment Framework. 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Through continuous monitoring a clear positive direction of travel can be demonstrated. 	
					Intended impact	Potential impact indicators
					<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To provide assurance that TVCA is striving for excellence beyond compliance* More proactive 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Completion and documentation of structured assessment against statutory standards for

					<p>approach to continuous improvement</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Improved organisational effectiveness and delivery confidence * Reduced risk of future intervention 	<p>leadership and service delivery</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Improvement actions are identified where gaps or opportunities are available * New actions are incorporated into the Organisational Improvement Plan
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Actions in Progress

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-March 2026	Next steps	Revised dates (if applicable)	Overarching measure of success	Evidence
SB	<p>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.</p> <p>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</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •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 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Ongoing - Strengthened operating model is an outcome of the action plan. • April – June 26 – internal review of current policies and procedures to be undertaken • April – onwards to take a prioritised approach to implementing policy and procedures following review. •March -September 2026 - Adoption and implementation related and key strategic items, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Updated Constitution •Single Assurance Framework •Governance Review outcome •Long-term priority setting •Local Growth Plan •Spatial Development Strategy •Investment pipeline •Workforce Development Strategy 		<p>Agreed operating model is rolled out and understood. Staff can report via surveys understanding of high-level objectives and where their role impacts these.</p>	
					Intended impact	Potential impact indicators
					<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * 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 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * 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 between June 2025 – March 2026	Ongoing steps	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.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pre-market engagement undertaken and concluded • Next steps were considered. 	•Ongoing- Once operating model is reviewed and updated, based on the		An appropriate PMO 'model' is in place for TVCA. Demonstrable benefits of	

	implement a fit for purpose PMO style model.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The requirement of a PMO model would follow an updated operating model. 	outcomes noted above a PMO model will be considered at a later phase.		the PMO can be seen & recorded.	
					Intended impact	Potential impact indicators
					<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 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 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 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.						
Accountable Director	Initially identified key steps	Key Milestones/Progress between June 2025 – March 2026	Ongoing steps	Revised dates if applicable	Overarching measure of success	Evidence
SB	Liaise with LGA/CIPFA/CFGs for peer review and external support & challenge. Agree dates & timescales	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 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. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Dates for the Peer Review will be agreed at an appropriate point following scoping and development of Peer Review Implementation Plan. 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Agreed dates with each planned into TVCA timescales benchmarking/improved position recorded & continually measured. 	
					Intended impact	Potential impact indicators
					<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Independent assurance on the effectiveness and 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Peer review completed within agreed timeframe

					<p>maturity of TVCAs improvement journey</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> *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 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * 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
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Information	
<p>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.</p>	
Details of changes made to columns	
Status column has been removed as actions are grouped under status headings as described above	
Column for impact to be added from March 2026 update	
Column for evidence to be added from March 2026 update	
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.

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.

Merged and presented under the Governance tab