



Transforming Local Governance in the Digital Age: A Review of Tanzania's Institutional and Legislative Frameworks with Evidence from Shinyanga Municipality and Nzega District Council

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Abstract

The study reviewed Tanzania's Institutional and Legislative Frameworks with Evidence from Shinyanga Municipality and Nzega District Council. Specifically, the analysis focused on the mandates given, implementation of the mandates in relation to good governance, and the extent to which the legal system accommodates digital technologies. The analysis is informed by the Constitution, Local Government Authorities (LGAs) Acts, amendments, national Information Communication Technology legal instruments, revised Information Communication Technology Policy, the selected councils' by-laws, strategic plans, digital governance implementation reports, council minutes, internal circulars, service delivery guidelines, and local development plans, as well as, the national new digital legislatives. The study employed a qualitative approach. Data were collected through documentary review then thematic data analysis was applied. Generally, the findings show that there is a comprehensive institutional set-up grounded in the constitution and key legislative instruments, but still put Local Government Authorities within command-and-control frameworks where substantial authority remains centralised, limiting the innovative capacity of LGAs in governance. Further revealed that the provisions promote the core tenets of good governance, yet the level of implementation remains uneven. Lastly, the available legal provisions have minimal enforcement mechanisms of digital compliance, leading to inconsistent digital transformation and underutilisation of digital technology. The study recommends reviewing and updating the constitution, Local Government Acts, and regulations to explicitly incorporate digital technology as a formal component of modern governance demands; the government must invest in digital infrastructure to strengthen institutional capacity, improve resource allocation, and provide continuous training. But also, the need for a specific legal framework and practical strategies that encourage digital governance across all government levels.

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Introduction

Nations that have institutionally and legally embraced digital technology have made significant improvements (Huseynova & Mazanova, 2023), leading governments around the globe to continue embracing digital-related norms to improve governance (Xanthopoulou et al., 2023; Mohamad et al., 2024). Similarly, Tanzania, through its Digital Economy Strategic Framework 2024–2034 and e-Government Strategy (2022), calls the public sector, including Local Government Authorities (LGAs), to supplant existing norms, systems and structures with more effective alternatives to enhance performance and good governance (The United Republic of Tanzania (URT), 2024). The government continues to emphasise technology, such as upgrading digital infrastructure in LGAs through clearly defined strategies, plans, and long-term objectives, as articulated in its National ICT Policy (2016). It explicitly encourages the modernisation of governance processes by replacing them with efficient, technology-supported approaches. Such ambitions are supported by broader legislative, regulatory, and institutional arrangements (URT, 2024).

In response, LGAs such as Shinyanga Municipality and Nzega District Council have introduced various digital systems and digital-enabled practices to support governance and service delivery. Among other provisions, the Local Government Acts No. 7 and 8 of 1982 require these councils to engage and collaborate with the grassroots communities. However, concerns have been raised regarding the councils' failure to fulfil these legislative roles effectively, resulting in weaker connections between councils and their communities (URT, 2022; and Lwoga et al., 2018). Existing institutional and legislative frameworks often do not fully align with the demands of digital-era governance (URT, 2016). As a result, tensions emerge between formal mandates and actual implementation, particularly with respect to openness, accountability, inclusiveness, efficiency, and effectiveness (Mohamad et al., 2024).

Literature emphasises that LGAs must reassess their institutional arrangements to move beyond inward-looking administrative routines and embrace more inclusive, stakeholder-oriented governance models (Sarwar et al., 2023; Huseynova & Mazanova, 2023). Similarly, scholars consistently highlight the need for public organisations to revisit their legislative frameworks, policies, structures, and operational processes to strengthen relations and align governance practices with contemporary demands (URT, 2016; Lubua, 2017). Scholars argue that strong enforcement mechanisms within such policy frameworks are vital for enhancing good governance (Sarwar et al., 2023). While national frameworks set ambitious expectations for digital governance, the degree to which LGAs have adapted their structures, norms, and operational procedures to meet these digital requirements remains unclear. Available studies, such as Ishengoma et al. (2018) and Lubua (2017), indicate that the struggle persists. Guided by these insights, this study evaluates Tanzania's institutional and legislative frameworks using evidence from the Shinyanga Municipality and the Nzega District Council. Specifically, it assesses various institutional and legislative frameworks guiding the functioning of LGAs and the extent to which they promote good governance; second, it evaluates how digital technologies are accommodated and integrated within these institutional and legislative arrangements in Shinyanga Municipality and Nzega District Council.

New institutionalism theory

The study was guided by the new institutionalism theory, which posits that organisations and governance structures are shaped not only by formal rules and efficiency concerns but also by social norms, cultural expectations, and the pursuit of legitimacy. The theory suggests that institutions, whether formal (laws and policies) or informal (practices and standards), shape the behaviour of actors within a system. In the contemporary context, literature indicates that organisations often adopt similar structures and practices under external pressures, and that the design and capacity of



institutions determine how effectively reforms such as digital-enhanced governance are implemented (Beçak & Longhi, 2015). It is argued that when institutional designs and conditions are absent, well-intentioned reforms may unintentionally reinforce structural inequalities due to institutional gaps (Schedler & Proeller, 2021). Thus, new institutionalism explains why institutions behave the way they do, why reforms succeed or fail, and how legitimacy, norms, and policy frameworks shape organisational practices.

In the lens of governance pillars, key legislation such as the Local Government (District Authorities) Act, the Local Government Finance Act, the Public Service Act, the E-Government Act of 2019, and the Electronic Transactions Act of 2015 provide mandates for service delivery, transparency, accountability, information management, and operations. However, integrating digital governance practices into these longstanding institutional arrangements introduces several theoretical and practical contradictions. Digitalisation disrupts conventional hierarchical routines that underpin many procedures articulated in LGA by-laws, standing orders, and administrative circulars (Sarwar et al., 2023). This often conflicts with established reporting procedures and communication protocols outlined in government circulars and guidelines, generating ambiguity and contradictions (Goddard & Mkasiwa, 2016).

Taking transparency as one of the core pillars of good governance presents a theoretical dilemma within digital governance: while other laws, including the Access to Information Act (2016), require government openness, the literature warns that excessive transparency may produce unintended consequences (Lubua, 2017). Tannou and Westerman (2012) note that digital communication exposes institutions to risks such as data loss, cyberattacks, and unauthorised access, which can jeopardise institutional integrity and violate regulatory requirements under the E-Government Act (2019) and the Cybercrimes Act (2015). This creates heightened expectations and pressures on LGAs, especially within rigid administrative procedures that have not yet been digitised or aligned with emerging governance realities (Bialozyt, 2017).

Traditional accountability structures in LGAs, anchored in hierarchical reporting lines defined by legislation and public service procedures, become less clear in digital environments. In Tanzanian LGAs, where accountability is legally tied to reporting, record-keeping, and audit procedures, digital systems introduce multi-actor arrangements involving IT personnel, external vendors, and online platforms, thereby blurring accountability boundaries (Lubua, 2017). These limitations hinder compliance with the digital provisions of the E-Government Act, the National ICT Policy, and various e-service guidelines. As a result, the potential of digital governance to enhance good governance becomes constrained (Lwoga & Chigona, 2019). Realising these opportunities, however, demands institutional reforms, capacity-building interventions, and regulatory adjustments to ensure that digital transformation strengthens rather than disrupts the mandates, norms, and procedures that underpin local governance (Mohamad et al., 2024).

Method

Research Approach and Design

This study adopted a qualitative research approach to examine complex governance phenomena, drawing on detailed information from various institutional and legislative frameworks that guide the functioning of LGAs (Creswell & Poth, 2018). Similarly, a case study design was employed, due to its ideal for in-depth exploration of contemporary phenomena within their real-life contexts and allowed detailed examination of institutional arrangements and governance practices



The Study Area

Shinyanga Municipality and the Nzega District Council were purposively selected to represent rural and urban settings and to generate comparative insights. Gaps in the literature also informed the selection of the areas, such as URT (2024) and Ndimbo et al. (2023) the areas are claimed to have inadequate service delivery and good governance despite the available institutional and legislative frameworks.

Data collection

Documentary review data were suitable for examining policies, legislation, and institutional records (Rajasekar & Verma, 2013). Both national and local government-level documents were reviewed. The national documents reviewed included the Constitution of the United Republic of Tanzania (1977), the Local Government Authorities Acts and amendments, national ICT policies, and digital governance legislation. The review further examined Shinyanga Municipal and Nzega District Councils, and the specific documents reviewed included the councils' by-laws, strategic plans, digital governance implementation reports, council minutes, internal circulars, service delivery guidelines, and local development plans. These documents were critical for assessing how national, institutional, and legislative frameworks are interpreted, operationalised, and constrained in practice at the LGA level.

Documentary review, therefore, enabled the study to capture both formal institutional arrangements (laws and policies) and context-specific norms, practices, and administrative strategies that influence digital governance in these areas.

Data analysis

The study employed thematic analysis to examine documentary data and identify gaps between institutional intentions articulated in laws, policies, and strategies and their implementation at the local government level. The study followed a systematic and iterative process involving document familiarisation, manual coding, and theme development. Key developed themes included institutional clarity, accountability structures, transparency and information disclosure, and integration of digital technologies. Then, the identified themes were compared across national- and local-level documents to assess consistency, gaps, and implementation challenges within Shinyanga Municipality and Nzega District Council.

Ethical issues

Ethical standards were adhered to as follows: all legal, policy, and institutional documents were obtained using official procedures with appropriate permissions. Accuracy, transparency, and proper citation were ensured to prevent distortion and plagiarism. Although the research did not involve direct human participation, institutional sensitivity and confidentiality were maintained by not attributing sensitive information to specific individuals or offices. Analytical objectivity was upheld through systematic thematic analysis grounded in documented evidence and aligned with the study objectives.

Results

Assessment of the various institutional set-ups guiding the functioning of LGAs

The section presents a review of Tanzania's institutional and legislative frameworks, supported by evidence from Shinyanga Municipality and the Nzega District Council. The analysis is based on three aspects: the mandates issued, their implementation with respect to the good-governance pillars of openness, accountability, inclusiveness, efficiency, and effectiveness, and, lastly, the extent to which digital technology is accommodated.



i. The Constitution of the United Republic of Tanzania of 1977

Not only does the constitution clearly stipulate the powers of local government, but it also indicates how LGAs must be connected to communities, consistent with democratic ideals and the pillars of good governance. Articles 145 and 146 state that:

"The National Assembly or the House of Representatives must provide for local government through legislation. One of the objectives of the local government is to enhance the democratic process within its area of jurisdiction and to apply democracy for facilitating the expeditious and faster development of the people."

It also requires government leaders to uphold and practice the principles of democratic governance, including promoting free and fair elections and ensuring community participation in service-delivery processes. The findings revealed that, although there was some consultation and cooperation between council committees and departments, the relationship between community members and their representatives remained weak. It was further found that existing consultations were primarily limited to the provision of information rather than fostering genuine collaboration, as required by the constitution. Notably, the Constitution remains silent on matters of digital governance, even though it affirms citizens' rights to participate in local government development initiatives.

ii. Local Government (District & Urban) Authorities Acts of 1982

The Acts grant LGAs several mandates, including autonomy to govern and make decisions on matters affecting their jurisdictions, subject to good governance principles. Councils are required to establish standing committees, conduct regular meetings, develop participatory plans, and report on their performance to the community and higher levels of government. Regarding digital technology, it was found that while the two Local Government Acts of 1982 (urban and rural) provide a strong foundation for decentralisation and participatory governance, they are largely silent on the integration of digital technology. Although the Acts provide for councillors to organise meetings to give feedback and communicate councils' decisions, the lack of a digital framework within the Acts enforcing the use of digital technologies led to some challenges affecting actors who began to adopt digital technologies in governance. Findings indicated that the councils have an inadequate legal framework for the adoption of proceedings for digitally facilitated meetings, communications, participation, planning, and decision-making. Despite their inadequacies, the Acts still provide room for interpretation and transformation; thus, some LGA actors have begun incorporating digital tools into their work to enhance good governance.

iii. The amended Regional Administration and Local Government Act of 2015

Specifically, it mandates local councils to strengthen Decentralisation-by-Devolution (D-by-D). The Act establishes the principle of transferring power, functions, and resources from the central government to local authorities, thereby empowering LGAs to make decisions and manage local affairs independently, in accordance with the principles of good governance. This Act makes modest progress toward acknowledging the role of digital tools in governance, but it still lacks explicit, detailed provisions on digital governance. Despite this, the Act provides LGAs with flexibility to adopt digital platforms and e-governance systems, particularly for planning, budgeting, monitoring, and citizen engagement.

iv. Local Government Laws (Miscellaneous Amendments) Act of 1999

Introduced as part of Tanzania's broader strategy to enhance decentralisation and improve the functioning of LGAs. It is the result of amendments to several previous laws, including the Local Government (District and Urban Authorities) Acts of 1982. The amendments legally recognised the role of LGAs as autonomous institutions with the authority to govern local affairs, manage resources, and provide services. It grants local councils the power and autonomy to manage resources.



For instance, “in section 111 it shall be the objective of the local authorities in performing their functions to (b) ensure democratic participation and control of decision-making by the people concerned.” To implement these mandates, it emphasised advancing the D-by-D policy through participation, transparency, accountability, and efficiency to improve service delivery. However, digital governance was not yet mainstream; consequently, it contains no explicit provisions on digital governance or ICT integration in local government operations.

New Policies and Legislative Digital Reforms

In response to emerging digital challenges, the government has initiated a series of reforms to the legal and regulatory frameworks to modernise governance systems and enhance service delivery. The key reforms are presented hereunder.

i. National Information and Communication Technology Policy of 2003 and its Revision in 2016

The National ICT Policy of 2003 was introduced to guide the government in integrating Information and Communication Technology (ICT) into public service delivery. While it laid the foundation for the adoption of ICT within public institutions, the policy fell short in addressing the evolving demands of digital governance. Consequently, like many other nations, Tanzania thought it necessary to revise the 2003 framework in light of rapid technological advancements. This led to the development of the revised National ICT Policy in 2016, which provides a more comprehensive framework tailored to the current digital landscape (National ICT Policy, 2016). It aims to guide key stakeholders when utilising digital technologies to improve public service delivery (URT, 2016; Lubua, 2014). In particular, the Policy is intended to facilitate access to digital infrastructure and to provide guidance on ICT policy and regulatory frameworks. Despite the strong emphasis on integrating digital technology in the public sector, the actual implementation in two selected cases remains inconsistent. Urban councils have adopted digital systems, whereas rural councils continue to rely on manual processes due to challenges such as limited technical capacity, a lack of ICT-skilled staff, budgetary constraints, and infrastructural disparities across councils, thereby hindering the full realisation of the policy's objectives.

ii. Electronic Transactions Act of 2015

Aimed at creating a legal framework for electronic communication, electronic records, and digital transactions. Among other provisions, the Act affords legal recognition to electronic records and signatures, and electronic data and messages may be used as evidence in service delivery, courts, and administrative bodies. However, disparities between the two cases in implementation persist due to limited digital infrastructure in rural areas and weak local-level enforcement and regulatory oversight.

iii. E-Government Act (e-GA) of 2019

The Act was enacted to strengthen the institutional framework for implementing, coordinating, and regulating electronic government (e-Government) initiatives across all public institutions in Tanzania. Specifically, the Act introduces national ICT standards to ensure compatibility, efficiency, and security in digital operations. It establishes the e-Government Authority, which is responsible for overseeing all ICT development in public institutions, thereby ensuring uniformity and interoperability. For instance, Section 28 of the E-Government Act (2019) provides that “a public institution shall, for the effective delivery of e-services, utilise ICT in providing government services to fulfil its institutional objectives.” Regarding the procedures involved in service delivery, the Act further emphasises that public institutions must adopt reliable and efficient digital processes to enhance e-Government service delivery. Specifically, subsection (d) highlights that public institutions are required to



"Use appropriate communication channels and languages that align with the available technology, to ensure citizens can access services effectively." In addition, Section 6(27) stipulates that...

"The concerned minister provides a published note specifying the appropriate control process and procedure to be followed to ensure adequate integrity, security, and confidentiality of information..."

Similarly, the E-Government Act (2019) explicitly discourages the continued use of paper-based processes within public institutions. It emphasises the importance of adopting digital record-keeping systems in which records are maintained in standardised formats that accurately capture essential details, such as the dates of creation, submission, and receipt of information. Moreover, Section 29 of the Act reinforces this shift by stating:

"Public institutions shall reduce the use of paper documents whether acquired, prepared, circulated, or preserved by adopting innovative and digitalised work processes, and by promoting the sharing of administrative information among public institutions."

Findings from the selected cases

Findings from respective by-laws, standing orders, digital governance reports and strategic plans of the selected cases indicate that the two councils are formally mandated to represent community interests, facilitate local development, disseminate government information, and link communities. All these explicitly assign councils responsibilities related to community consultation, oversight of service delivery, and participation in policy and planning processes. However, evidences reveal a disconnect between these formal mandates and actual practice. Governance processes are predominantly driven by council committees and technical officials, with limited practical community involvement in agenda-setting and decision-making.

With respect to the implementation of mandates, practical adherence to the principles of good governance in both LGAs remains weak. Council meeting records and reports on community-level interactions via websites indicated that the limited collaboration and information sharing is one-way, mainly, characterised by limited mechanisms for feedback and follow-ups. This limits and undermines the intent to promote good governance. The dominance of traditional governance practices, particularly reliance on in-person meetings, continues to slow decision-making and impede effective service delivery.

Further, found that the two councils partially and unevenly integrate the technologies in governance processes. Digital governance reports and administrative records indicate that, although basic digital tools such as mobile phones and council websites exist, their use for participatory governance remains limited, as councils rely heavily on traditional communication methods, including physical meetings, written notices, and verbal announcements. Where digital tools are used, they are primarily applied for one-way information dissemination rather than interactive engagement. Institutional uncertainty regarding transparency, reputational risks, and unclear digital governance guidelines further constrain councils' use of digital platforms. Additionally, the absence of clearly defined digital frameworks, limited skills and infrastructure, particularly within the Nzega District Council, undermined the effective implementation of national digital governance policies.

Discussion

In this section, the discussion is informed by national and local legislation across three dimensions: mandates assigned to LGAs, the implementation of these mandates in relation to the pillars of good governance, and the extent to which legal and institutional arrangements accommodate digital technologies.



To begin with, the mandates provided by almost all institutional and legislative frameworks, including the Constitution of URT, specify LGAs' responsibilities for service delivery, development planning, revenue mobilisation, and community participation. The policy of decentralisation-by-devolution (D-by-D) emphasises enhancing autonomy to LGAs to promote good governance. Evidence from selected councils' by-laws, standing orders, and strategic plans confirms similar mandates aligned with constitutional, LG Acts, and D-by-D principles. However, council records and implementation practices indicate that these mandates are not being implemented adequately. Overlaps and fragmentation of authority remain evident in approval procedures and reporting requirements. Even the reviewed digital governance Acts indicated that central ministries retain significant power over grassroots affairs, limiting good governance practices. This undermines genuine autonomy as scholars described "shared governance without shared capacity" (Smoke, 2020). Cemented by studies that decentralisation in many African countries remains incomplete due to overlaps of authority structures between central and local governments (Saito, 2018; Fransman & McLeod, 2020).

Similarly, the available mandates granted, as further confirmed by the councils' reviewed documents, show minimal recognition of digital governance. Scholars have documented a misalignment between decentralisation frameworks in developing contexts and contemporary digital governance demands (Kettunen & Kallio, 2021; Gil-Garcia et al., 2020). As observed in Shinyanga and Nzega, limited fiscal options and constrained ICT budgets further weaken councils' ability to operationalise their mandates, producing what Andrews (2020) describes as "mandates without muscles...". Scholars further emphasise that effective mandates require enough resources, including fiscal powers (Shah, 2021). In brief, the mandates are extensive but tightly constrained, resulting in misalignment with contemporary digital governance realities.

Regarding the implementation of such mandates, it was found that although national legislation and local council strategies and procedures emphasise good governance principles, empirical evidence indicates significant gaps between legal intent and practice. Regarding community participation, we found that councils' meeting records and community engagement reports suggest that participation is primarily confined to traditional channels, leaving marginalised groups, consistent with findings that traditional participation mechanisms are increasingly exclusionary (Soya & Sanga, 2020; Mollel & Leshabari, 2021). In terms of transparency, both councils demonstrate a strong bias toward upward reporting to central government institutions. While plans, budgets, and reports are prepared, disclosure to communities is mainly informational and retrospective. Audit outcomes, performance reports, and budget execution data are rarely communicated in accessible formats, reinforcing patterns identified by Kayuza and Komba (2022). Councils' records show well-established upward accountability through audits and reporting. Still, feedback mechanisms for citizens are limited, informal, and inconsistently applied, reducing opportunities for councils to be held accountable by their communities (Mnyasenga & Kessy, 2022; Ngware, 2021). Regarding efficiency and effectiveness, evidence indicates reliance on manual, paper-based processes in both LGAs, leading to administrative delays and confirming broader evidence that traditional governance practices undermine service-delivery efficiency (Wangwe & Adam, 2022; World Bank, 2023). Differences observed between Shinyanga Municipality and Nzega District Council suggest that effectiveness often depends on local leadership initiatives rather than institutionalised systems.

Concerning the integration of digital technologies in local governance, findings from the Shinyanga and Nzega councils indicate partial and uneven integration. While basic ICT tools are available, their use is mainly limited to internal communication and one-way information dissemination. Despite the Electronic Transactions Act (2015) and the E-Government Act (2019) providing a national legal basis



for digital records, e-payments, and interoperability, council-level documents reveal uncertainty. Neither LGA has fully embedded digital workflows into core governance processes such as participatory planning, feedback collection, or performance monitoring. This supports arguments that when sector-specific legislation lags behind national ICT policies, implementation becomes discretionary and uneven (Heeks, 2021; Schuppan, 2020).

Additionally, institutional concerns about transparency risks, limited digital skills, infrastructure constraints, and the absence of locally tailored digital governance guidelines further impede adoption. As a result, councils function mainly as implementers of centrally designed systems, reinforcing observations that excessive centralisation can restrict local innovation (Cordella & Tempini, 2020). This legislative and institutional silence at the regional level creates what scholars describe as a “digital governance vacuum” (Gil-Garcia, 2020). Despite the availability of ICT policies, the review indicated that statutory reinforcement mechanisms remain weak in these areas. Although the institutional and legislative frameworks outline governance ideals, procedural/operational evidence reveals gaps stemming from insufficient enforcement tools, funding, and limited capacity (Komba & Lyimo, 2022). Thus, governance quality is often dependent on individual council initiatives or donor-driven projects rather than institutionalised mandates.

It is advised that digital governance requires effective ICT integration, explicit legal mandates, interoperability frameworks, and institutional alignment (Gil-Garcia, Dawes & Pardo, 2018; OECD, 2022). Tanzania's ICT-related policy, NICTP (2003; revised 2016), the Electronic Transactions Act (2015), and the E-Government Act (2019) provide a robust national framework for digital transformation. Yet, their integration with LGA-specific legislation remains fragmented. The National ICT Policy (2016) promotes e-service delivery, digital inclusion, and ICT-supported governance, but LGA legal frameworks fail to implement these priorities. Scholars argue that when sector-specific laws lag behind national ICT policies, implementation becomes discretionary and uneven (Heeks, 2021; Schuppan, 2020). This explains why digitisation varies between the two LGAs.

Conclusion

This study concludes that although Tanzania's institutional and legislative frameworks grant LGAs broad mandates for decentralised governance, their effectiveness in practice remains limited, as shown by experiences in Shinyanga Municipality and Nzega District Council. Although reforms such as the Local Government Laws (Miscellaneous Amendments) Act aimed to enhance decentralisation, both councils continue to operate within command-and-control systems in which significant authority over local matters remains centralised, thereby restricting their capacity to innovate in governance and service delivery.

Findings from the two LGAs further reveal that the implementation of good governance principles is conceptually supported but operationally weak, primarily confined to traditional consultation methods and one-way information sharing.

Despite the existence of national digital governance instruments like the Electronic Transactions Act (2015), the revised National ICT Policy (2016), and the E-Government Act (2019), practical integration at the local level remains limited as the selected councils' documents shows that digital are used primarily for basic communication and information dissemination, rather than for interactive participation, accountability, or performance monitoring. The available weak statutory enforcement mechanisms, limited ICT infrastructure, low digital skills among local actors, and the absence of LGA-specific digital governance frameworks contribute to uneven and fragmented digitisation outcomes.

Overall, the study finds that Tanzania has a comprehensive constitutional and legislative foundation for decentralised and digitally enabled local governance; however, in Shinyanga Municipality and



Nzega District Council, this foundation is weakened by overlapping mandates, constrained autonomy, and insufficient alignment with digital governance paradigms. Consequently, the realisation of democratic participation and digital transformation is left mainly to the discretion of individual councils and actors, resulting in inconsistent implementation and limited citizen influence. Strengthening the integration of digital governance provisions within LGA-specific legislation and institutional practices is therefore critical for translating legal intent into meaningful, inclusive, and effective local governance outcomes.

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